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Monastics, Sex and Marriage

Renunciation, monastic celibacy and the challenges of secularism and modernism
with special reference to Japanese Buddhism up to the end of the 20th century

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1 The purpose of renunciation

1.1 NO SEX PLEASE, WE'RE MONASTICS. The issue of monastics and sex has been discussed elsewhere.¹ We shall here list only the key points related to our discussion on “monastics, sex and marriage,” especially in connection with clerical marriage and fornication.² By definition, a monastic—that is, a monk (*bhikkhu*) or a nun (*bhikkhuni*)—has gone forth (*pabbajita*) from the household or family life to a homeless life. To remind himself and show to others that this is the case, a renunciant shaves off hair and beard and put on the saffron robes.³

The renunciant lives restrained by the rule of the monastic code (the Pātimokkha), proper in conduct and avoiding improper places. He trains himself in the training-rules (*sikkhā,pada*), seeing danger in the slightest fault. He avoids wrong livelihood and is possessed of moral virtue. He guards his sense-doors for the sake of mindfulness and full awareness in living a contented life.⁴

On account of this renunciation, monastics live economically insecure lives, earning no income whatsoever and using no money, but is properly dependent on the laity for their almsfood, robes, shelter and health. The laity, on their part, listening to the Dharma or being inspired by the moral virtue of a renunciant, provides him or her with alms, *out of faith*. The last phrase is emphasized because this giving is itself an act of merit which further benefits both the laity with merit, and the renunciant with health to keep up his practice.

As lay Buddhists, we must ensure that we in no way encourage any worldliness in any monastic, or cause the break to break their monastic precepts, such as giving them improper gifts, or being intimate with them in any way, even on the internet (which the renunciant should renounce, too). Indeed, if there is wholesome respect between the monastics and the laity, the laity should constantly remind the latter of their practice for awakening in this life itself. We must never lose sight of the true purpose of Buddhist monasticism, that is, as the Buddha originally intends it to be.

The Aggi-k,khandhūpama Sutta (A 7.68) clearly states that “if one who is immoral, evil by nature, whose conduct is filthy and doubtful, underhand in deeds, *claiming to be a recluse* when not one, claiming to live the holy life when he does not, inwardly rotten, impure by nature,” were to embrace a woman, or sit with her or lie down close to her, it “would be bring him harm and suffering for a long time, and with the body’s breaking up, after death, he would be reborn a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm.”⁵

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF MONASTICISM. The purpose of renunciation—of becoming monks and nuns—is to become arhats in this life itself, or at least attain some level of awakening. This is clear from the numerous suttas in the early Buddhist scripture, recounting how various disciples are liberated. In fact, the early suttas are records of how men and women meeting the Dharma and becoming arhats and saints. Over the centuries, as Buddhism spread beyond India, the Buddha Word was pushed aside, diluted, even twisted, and displaced by local beliefs, rituals and superstitions.

⁶The purpose of being monks or nuns is to become arhats in this life itself, or at least attain some level of awakening. This is clear from numerous suttas in the early Buddhist scripture. In fact, the early suttas

¹ See **Sexuality** = SD 31.7 (2).

² Here, “fornication” is used as meaning human sexual intercourse other than between a man and his wife (Merriam Webster 3rd New International Dictionary).

³ **D 2.40-41/1:62 f, 11.9-10/1:213; M 100.9/2:211; S 16.11.14/2:219; A 10.99.5/5:204.**

⁴ **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.41-42/1:62 f) = SD 8.10.

⁵ A 7.68.7/4:129 = SD 52.12.

⁶ An earlier and longer version of the rest of this section appears as “The laity and monastics” (*Simple Joys* 2011: 14.1).

are records of how men and women meeting the Dharma and becoming arhats and saints. Over the centuries, as Buddhism spread beyond India, the Buddha Word was pushed aside, diluted, and priority was given to local beliefs and rituals. Buddhism and monasticism can be radically and inappropriately changed on account of various difficult social conditions or by those spiritually weak to promote themselves.⁷

The reason why monastics *voluntarily* forego sex is so that they can, under ideal human conditions, direct all their energies to mental training in focussing their minds to be free of the body, a profoundly blissful state known as dhyana (*jhāna*).⁸ Such supersensory bliss is very much better than sex because it is “a pleasure that has nothing to do with sensual pleasures and unwholesome states.”⁹ Imbued with such higher pleasure, a meditative monastic would never even think of desiring sex: it is like we have outgrown our childish toys for adult things. Conversely, one claiming to be a monastic who shows tendencies for sensual pleasures, playfulness and sociability, surely has been meditating properly or even keeping to the monastic precepts.

The Buddhist monastic system and the meditation teachings as taught by the Buddha work very well if we allow them to. They are like original prescription of good medicine, to be taken as prescribed. If we adulterate the medicine, or do not take it at all, how can we be healed? Or worse, if we fiddle with the medicine labels, or sell the medicine on the black market for personal benefit, what will happen to our health in the end? Before we even talk about reforming Buddhism, we must have a deep understanding and experience of the Dharma.

While the laity should be socially-engaged, caring for society in a Dharma-moved way, renunciants should simply be *socially disengaged*, but yoked to their meditation and Dharma training. A monastic who tries to be a social worker, whether out of guilt or pity for others, would find himself straddling between his training and the world, and fall in between the samsaric currents. The renunciant’s robe is not meant for social activism but a reminder of inner stillness.

We should be less of Buddhist *inventors*, and more of being Buddhist discoverers. This is because Buddhism is **the direct understanding of true reality**. We may invent new ways of chanting, or meditating, but we cannot “invent” true reality: we can only discover it. Furthermore, the Buddha has given us an easy plan for the self-awakening of both the laity and the monastic in this life itself.¹⁰ The Buddha Dharma is like the fresh clean air: we do not need to change it; we should change the Dharma, but change ourselves.

1.3 MEAT-EATING. In this essay, we will investigate how Buddhism in Japan became secularized and modernized, centering our discussion on the decriminalization of “meat-eating and marriage” (肉食妻帯 *nikujiki saitai*). Here, however, we will only focus on the issue of clerical marriage, as we have discussed meat-eating elsewhere.¹¹

The issue of meat-eating was highlighted in Japanese Buddhism mainly because it was almost exclusively of the Mahāyāna, which as a rule abstained from meat. Although Shintō does not have any doctrinal teachings on vegetarianism, Shintoists customarily espouse the practice, probably through Buddhist influence. As such, even the imperial household was served vegetarian meals, that is, until 1872, in Meiji times.¹²

2 Background to the modernization of Japan¹³

2.1 HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS RELATING TO BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

⁷ See eg **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b esp (5)

⁸ See **Dhyana** = SD 8.4.

⁹ **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36.32/1:246 f) = SD 1.17. See also **Sexuality** = SD 31.7 (1.6).

¹⁰ See S 25.1-10, where the Buddha guarantees streamwining in this life itself if we only constantly reflect on impermanence. See eg **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1/3:225) = SD 16.7.

¹¹ See **Āmangandha S** (Sn 14/2.2) = 4.24.

¹² Jaffe 2001:109, 114.

¹³ Much of this section is based on Jaffe 2001. For reviews, see eg Asuka 2002, Covell 2003, and Arai 2005.

2.1.0 Main historical periods. In this section (2), we will survey some key developments in Japan's history re-lated to the rise and fate of Buddhism in Japan up to the end of the Tokugawa period. A more detailed study with sources has been done elsewhere.¹⁴ In section (3), we will look at subsequent Buddhist developments in some detail, especially the Japanese attempts to modernize their nation and how this affected Buddhism, more specifically in secularizing it.

We shall briefly survey the history of Buddhism in Japan as being roughly divided into these six periods, namely,

the pre-Nara period	(6 th century-710),	[2.1.1]
the Nara period	(710-794),	[2.1.2]
the Heian period	(794–1185),	[2.1.3]
the post-Heian period	(1185 onwards),	[2.1.4]
the arrival of the westerners,	(1543 onwards)	[2.1.5] and
the Tokugawa	(1600-1868).	[2.1.6]

We will examine how developments in each of these periods gradually build up to radical changes in Japanese Buddhism during the Tokugawa period. Then we will examine developments in late and post-Tokugawa times [2.2], noting the key changes [2.3-2.5]. Then we will examine more closely the changes in Japanese Buddhism during the Meiji period as surveyed in Richard Jaffe's *Neither Monk Nor Layman* (2001), especially in connection with the secularization of Japanese Buddhism [3].

2.1.1 Pre-Nara period (6th century-710)

2.1.1.1 PRINCE SHOTOKU. Buddhism probably arrived in Japan in the 6th century or earlier. The devout prince **Shotoku** (673-621) was considered the real founder and first great patron of Buddhism in Japan, who built a large temple complex, the **Horyu-ji**, at Nara. Shotoku was the nephew and regent of **the empress Suiko** who, as early as 624, three years after Shotoku's death, had to regulate the Buddhist clergy.

The Taiho Code of 702 included several sections dealing with religious administration, including the organization of the Shintō bureau and the bureau of religious Daoism. A special section of the code dealt with the regulation of monks and nuns. This shows that not only had Buddhism become an influential religion, but by that very fact, the state had to take steps to curb its excesses and maintain a religious balance.

2.1.1.2 REASONS FOR BUDDHISM'S SUCCESS. The success of Buddhism in early Japan was partly due to the fact that the country was undergoing its initial stages of formation, and partly due to the depth of the Buddhist teachings and the great appeal of its art, ritual and magic. In fact, soon after the arrival of Buddhism in Japan, the Buddha was worshipped as a *kami*.

Moreover, in China, Buddhism was a religion of the ruling class and social elite. Soon after its arrival, it was first accepted by the ruling family, and gradually followed by the leading families, then by the court and finally by the state. Later diplomatic missions from Korea brought more Buddhist images and scriptures, and most important of all, Buddhist monks, the portable store-house of teachings and tradition.

The Japanese were just beginning to learn the Chinese writing system, so it took specialists like the Buddhist monks to read and expound the Chinese translations of the Buddhist texts. The Buddhist monks also served the religious needs of the court and the state. In this nascent period, Buddhism was a religion of the ruling elite, believed or practised alongside other Japanese beliefs, such as Shintō.¹⁵

The Taika period (645-710) saw an influx of Chinese culture, Japan's first contact with a literate and highly organized culture. It was in this period that Japan had its first truly centralized government, patterned after Chinese models (such as the legal codes). Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism were imported from Korea and China. Shintoism, Japan's folk religion, was organized from indigenous traditions. The earliest interactions of these traditions occurred in this period.

2.1.2 The Nara period (710-794).

¹⁴ See Piya Tan, *History of Buddhism*, 5 Buddhism in Japan, Singapore, 2005. Accessible at <https://sites.google.com/site/dharmafarer/home/books-by-piya-tan>.

¹⁵ Further see Piya Tan, *History of Buddhism 5: Buddhism in Japan*, 2005 §§6.1-7.

2.1.2.1 A CENTRALIZED SOCIETY. Nara was the first permanent capital Japan had. Life in the imperial court and among the nobility was elaborate and highly formalized. It was a feudal system in which the commoner was widely separated from the higher classes. The first Japanese writings (such as the dynastic chronicles) were composed during this period.

A network of Buddhist temples grew up in the provinces with the Todai-ji (710-784) at Nara as the central cathedral. The principal image in the Todai-ji is that of the Lochana (Vairocana), the Sun Buddha. Just as the sun sits in the centre of the physical universe, so Todai-ji sits in the centre of the Buddhist network of monasteries and nunneries.

2.1.2.2 THE 6 NARA SCHOOLS. During the Nara period, six philosophical schools of Buddhism were introduced. They are briefly, with their distinctive features, as follows.

(1) **The Jōjitsu** (625) and (2) **the Kusha Schools** (658) based mainly on Nikāya texts. The Jōjitsu tradition centred on the *Jōjitsu-ron* (Chinese: Ch'eng shih-lun; Satya, siddhi Śāstra by Harivarman). The Kusha focussed on the *Kusha-ron* (Vasubandhu's Abhidharma, kośa Śāstra). The texts of these two schools were also studied by other schools. In fact, these two were not really schools in their own right, but merely traditions based on the texts mentioned.

(3) **The Sanron School** (Chinese: Sanlun) (625) was a Chinese elaboration of the Indian Madhyamaka of Nāgārjuna. The word Sanron means "three treatises" on which the school was based: Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka Kārikā and Dvādaśa, dvāra, and Āryadeva's Śata, śāstra. The Madhyamika school negates all philosophical statements on the ultimate truth, calling for a direct experience of Nirvana which is said to be "empty" of all predications.

(4) **The Hossō School** (Chinese: Faxiang) (654) based itself on the Yogācāra tradition, that is, the Faxiang (Dharma Characteristic) school introduced into China by Xuanzang.

(5) **The Kegon School** (Chinese: Huayan) (736) is devoted to the study of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra (Chinese: Huayan jing).

(6) **The Ritsu School** (Chinese: Lizhong) (738) is named after the Vinaya tradition, based mainly on Daoxuan's Nanshan branch of the tradition. In Japan, this sect was responsible for the ordination of the clergy.

As in China, whence they came, each school focussed on one or more of the classic Chinese Buddhist texts, defining their distinctive viewpoints.¹⁶

2.1.2.3 DECLINE. In due course, Nara became famous for its profound philosophy and magnificent temples. But as the Nara temples grew in prestige and wealth by attracting bequests from the nobility and favouritism from the state, it attracted politically ambitious people into its cloisters. In a short time, the temples became so rich and powerful that their interference in the politics of the state became intolerable.

The Buddhist clergy of Nara, especially under the leadership of Dōkyō during the reign of empress Shōtoku (reigned 764-770), showed considerable influence in secular affairs. The situation reached such a critical level that during the transitional period (784-794), emperor Kammu (737-806) moved the capital to Nagaoka-kyo, between Osaka and Kyoto, and then in 794, again moved, this time, to Heian-kyo (Kyoto), which would remain the capital until 1868. (Before the Nara period, it was a normal custom to move the capital at the death of every emperor in the belief that the emperor's death defiled the city.)

By this time, too, the ruling elite, painfully aware of the growing power and influence that the Buddhist denominations wielded, were more careful with their dealings with them. In fact, as **Nakamura Hajime** has noted, by the 7th century, "the state functioned not as a patron (*Schutzpatronat*) but as the "religious police" (*Religionspolizei*) of Buddhism."¹⁷ By the Meiji period, this process is complete so that Japanese Buddhism is, as a rule, effectively secularized, all in the name of nationalism and modernization.

2.1.3 The Heian period (794–1185)

2.1.3.1 INDIGENIZATION. During this period, the capital moved to **Kyoto**, where a highly developed aesthetic life existed among the court and nobility. In fact, Heian was the apogee of the Japan's aristocrat-

¹⁶ See Piya Tan 2005 §§6.9-10.

¹⁷ Nakamura 1960:455 & 1964:526 quoting Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* II 1921: 288.

ic age, which produced one of the world's most exquisite cultures. During this period, Japan fully assimilated the elements of Chinese society that the builders of the Japanese state had long emulated. It was also a period of *indigenization* of Japanese culture.

The leaders of Heian Buddhism were determined to indigenize Buddhism so that it was a genuinely *Japanese* religion. As a result, Buddhism became more closely related to Japanese culture and began to penetrate the countryside. While the “old Buddhism” (the 6 Schools of Nara) was mainly the religion of the nobility and the clergy, the “new Buddhism” of Heian was increasingly a religion of the masses.

Although the first Heian emperor, Kammu (737-806), disapproved of the Heian clergy, he was benevolent to two young monks of Kyoto: Saichō (Dengyo Daishi, 767-822) and Kukai (Kobo Daishi, 774-835). They founded the two new Buddhist schools that dominated the Heian period: the **Tendai** (Chinese: Tiantai) was founded by Saichō in 806, and the **Shingon** (Chinese: Chenyan or Mizong) by Kukai in 816. Saichō and Kukai, were both vastly different in character, but motivated by the same disillusionment: to break away from the suffocating domination of the Nara clergy; both went to China for the same purpose: to look for authentic Buddhist teachings. After their return, both monks were allowed to build their own temples, but outside the capital.

2.1.3.2 SHIN AND IKKŌ BUDDHISMS. Pure Land Buddhism or Amida pietism, especially the Jōdo Shin-shū, became very popular and powerful in mid-Heian times. A small, militant, antinomian offshoot of the Jōdo Shin-shū, known as **Ikkō-shū** 一向宗, was founded by Ikkō Shunjo (a disciple of Ryochu of the Chinzei branch of the Jōdō-shu), and which was similar to Ippen's Ji-shu.

However, when the authorities began to crack down on the Amida pietist movement, little distinction was made between the various factions. Most of Ikkō Shunjo's followers defected to the more powerful Jōdo Shinshu, so that the name Ikkōshu became synonymous with Jōdo Shin-shū.¹⁸

Amida pietism, especially the Jōdo Shin-shū, provided a liberation theology for a wave of popular uprisings against the feudal system in late-fifteenth and sixteenth century Japan which are known as the Ikkō-ikki, mobs of warrior monks and peasant revolting against samurai rule. The causes of this uprising are still disputed, but may have had both religious and sociopolitical causes.

As a consequence of the Ikkō-ikki 一向一揆 and the growing power of the Jōdo Shin-shū, the sect's fortress-temples Ishiyama Hongan-ji and Nagashima (built at the end of the 15th century) were eventually destroyed by Oda Nobunaga's armies. The Nagashima fortress was razed in 1574, taking about 20,000 people with it. The Ishiyama Hongan-ji withstood the longest siege in Japanese history, before surrendering in 1580. Upon its ruins, Toyotomi Hideyoshi built Osaka Castle (1583-1597), which still stands today. Following the destruction of Nagashima, Nobunaga ordered a search of all Echizen province to kill every last member of the Ikkō sect.

2.1.3.3 DHARMA-ENDING AGE. The reason for this was the Mahayana idea of *mappō*, the concept that the Dharma would go through three stages after the Final Nirvana of the Buddha: 500 years of prosperity, 1000 years of decline, and finally the disappearance in the latter days (*mappō*) or Dharma-ending age.

Once *mappō* began, widely believed in Japan to have been in 1052, it would be extremely difficult to attain enlightenment or spiritual liberation through self-effort, as most Japanese Buddhist schools taught. The only hope was faith in the saving grace of Amida. Thus, the court nobles and ladies chanted the *nembutsu* with fervour and built Amida halls within their residences to show their faith. Even then, it should be understood that religious belief in Heian society was highly eclectic. The courtiers seemingly made little distinction among the different schools of Buddhism, Shintō beliefs, Confucianism and Daoist concept of *yin-yang*.

Nature, in interesting ways, seemed to have contributed to pre-modern Japanese world-view. In 1274 and 1283, Kublai Khan sent huge fleets to invade Japan twice, but were serendipitously repelled by typhoons on both occasions. In May 1293, a major earthquake and tsunami hit Sagami Bay¹⁹ and Kamaku-

¹⁸ Dobbins 1989. In 1774, a number of sects of Ikkō-shu petitioned the Tokugawa authorities for the right to use the name Jōdo Shin-shū, but it was rejected because of the protests from the Jōdo denomination. It was only from 1872 onwards that they could do so. See Tamamura Taijō 1967:99 f.

¹⁹ Sagami Bay lies south of Kanagawa Prefecture in Honshu, central Japan, some 40 km (25 mi) SW of Tokyo.

ra,²⁰ killing over 23,000 people.²¹ In 1241 and 1257, earthquakes and tsunamis recurred in the same general area, both of which were of magnitude 7.0.

Such natural disasters, social turmoil, political upheavals and other pestilences that affect Japanese society in almost every era, surely hardened their lives. They also created a pervading urgent need for quick and practical religious security and succour. As such, those religions and systems that could make such promises succeeded more than the rest.

2.1.4 The post-Heian period (1185 onwards)

2.1.4.1 THE KAMAKURA PERIOD (1185-1333). In 1185, Yoritomo and his younger brother Yoshitsune defeated the forces of the Taira clan in a decisive naval battle in the Inland Sea. Yoritomo had earlier led a successful campaign against the Ainu (an autochthonous Caucasoid tribe) pushing them northward and was awarded the title of *Seii-tai-shogun* (Barbarian-subduing General).

Shortened to *shogun* 将軍 (literally, “commander of the force”), it became the title of the major military commander. Theoretically, the shogun was the emperor’s military adviser or chief of staff, but in reality he was the *de facto* head of state, a situation which continued until 1868. As such, this period is sometimes called the Kamakura Shogunate.

The seat of government was moved to **Kamakura**, where the focus of attention shifted from the effeminate nobleman to the powerful warrior. The merchant class was also rising. But there was a general uncertainty as civil strife grew. Political power had effectively passed from the hands of the aristocracy to the emergent military class, initiating an age of feudalism that would last until 1868.

2.1.4.2 SHINRAN 親鸞 (1173-1263) was the founder of the Jōdo Shin school of Pure Land Buddhism, he teaches that pure faith (*shinjin*) alone is enough for one to be reborn into the Pure Land. He was born in Hino (now a part of Fushimi, Kyoto) at the turbulent close of the Heian Period and lived during the formative Kamakura Period, when a number of new Buddhisms arose in Japan. Shinran entered monastic life at 8 and served as a *dōsō* (menial monk) at the Enryaku-ji until 1201, when he became a disciple of Hōnen [2.1.4.5].

While associated with Hōnen, he was permitted to copy the master’s major work, the *Senchaku hongan nembutsushū*, and his portrait. When Hōnen was exiled to Shikoku in 1207, Shinran was banished to Echigo Province (now Niigata Prefecture). It was probably during this period that he renounced the robe and married to raise a large family.

Shinran was the first Buddhist priest to publicly marry, declaring that he is *hisohizoku*, “not monk, not layman.” Thereafter, the practice became fairly common. He did not return to Kyoto even after his pardon in late 1211, for his master died at the beginning of the following year. Instead, he migrated with his family to the Kantō region, where he gathered a body of followers.

A major development in this phase of his life was the compilation of his monumental work, *Kyōgyōshinshō* (Doctrine, Practice, Faith, Realization) (c1224). It is an anthology of quotations from the Buddhist texts and commentaries, interspersed with interpretative comments to clarify the True Doctrine (*kyō*), the True Practice (*gyō*), the Truth Faith (*shin*) and the True Realization (*shō*) of the Pure Land School.

From his return to Kyōto around 1235 until about 1260, Shinran devoted himself to literary efforts. He counseled his disciples through a variety of writings, especially correspondence. After he died in 1263 in Kyōto, his ashes were interred in the Ōtani area, west of Higashiyama in Kyōto. The site became a devotional centre and later the location of the school’s major temple, Hongan-ji 本願寺 (Temple of the Primal Vow).

2.1.4.3 SHINRAN’S REASON FOR MARRYING. Chikū’s teacher, Saigin, in the *Kyakushō mondō shū* 客照問答集 defended Shin clericals by saying that it was in the spirit of *wakō dōjin* 和光同塵, that is, “dimmed their radiance and became identical to the dust of the profane world,”²² that is, here, “hiding one’s brilli-

²⁰ Kamakura is in Kanagawa Prefecture, about 48 km (30 mi) SW of Tokyo.

²¹ http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/nndc/struts/results?eq_0=494&t=101650&s=18&d=99,91,95,93&nd=display.

²² Tr the German, “gedämpften Licht, das sich dem Staub angleicht,” of Bernhard Scheid, “Honji suijaku: Die Angleichung von Buddhas und Kami,” 2008: http://www.univie.ac.at/rel_jap/an/Honjisuijaku.

ance and assuming the same form as a layperson.”²³ This was, in other words, a skillful means with which to reach out to those caught in the world, committing terrible moral breaches.

Shinran’s great grandson, **Kakunyo** 覚如 (1270-1351), the third *monshu*, or caretaker, of the family mausoleum in Kyoto which gradually became the Hongan-ji, in his *Shinran muki* and *Godenshō* wrote of Shinran’s dream of Kannon (Guanyin) appearing to him, instructing him to marry her manifested as a young woman in his community.²⁴ The crowning argument, says Jaffe, since Kakunyo, “portrayed Shinran’s embracing *kikujiki saitai* [meat-eating and marriage] as a willful act of compassion made by a manifestation of Amida, not as an admission of failure by a flawed human being.”²⁵

However, scholars have noted that Shinran made no such claims. His actual intention in abandoning precepts and marrying was, in fact, a humble and profound acknowledgement of his frailty and inability to practise.²⁶ This aspect of Shinran’s personality is, directly or indirectly confirmed by the fact that prominent Shin apologists, such as Chikū, often highlighted the theme of human frailty and sexual needs. [3.3.2.1]

2.1.4.4 A PSYCHOANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. All this is rich grist for the psychoanalytic mill. We see here that Shinran is basically a humble struggling person, going through an identity crisis, and finally accepting himself for what he is. **Saigin’s** *wakō dōjin*—if it meant that Shinran was viewed as only pretending to be morally frail when he was not, so that frail humans could identify with him—is what might be construed as an unconscious defence mechanism of rationalization, “whereby the individual uses complicated (often circuitous) explanations in order to justify behavior.”²⁷

Kakunyo’s attempt at *deifying* Shinran, on the other hand, might be taken as an interesting example of the unconscious defence of compensation, which simply is “the adoption of one behavior when another is unsuccessful.”²⁸ This analysis becomes more useful when we first see how another defence—that of denial—works unconsciously on us. Denial is “a primitive defense mechanism where the individual wards off unwanted emotions and experiences by not noticing or remembering experiences which are quite salient to others.”²⁹ The defence mechanism of denial can be seen in those who were unable to accept the Buddha’s death (or the death of any great teacher, prophet or authority figure),³⁰ which later lead to his being deified, worship as a god, or even raised to the level of an almighty or primordial figure.³¹

Here, we can see strong elements of Kakunyo’s denial of Shinran’s death and humanity. Firstly, for Shinran, who was a monk, to have married and have sex, is clearly against the most basic and definitive norms of monastic spirituality. Secondly, there was an almost consensual rejection of such licence (and Shin affluence) by non-Shin sectarians, who severely criticized it. Thirdly, the turbulent events of Japan-

²³ Jaffe 2001:51.

²⁴ Kakunyo wrote that on the 95th day of Shinran’s 100-day retreat in the Rokkakudō, Kannon appeared to him in a dream and said, “If the believer, because of the fruition of karma, is driven by sexual desire, | Then I shall take on the body of a beautiful woman to be ravished by him. | Throughout his entire life I shall adorn him well, | And at death I shall lead him to birth in Pure Land.” (Dobbins 1989:23 f). It was this dream that led Shinran to give up celibacy and marry. For a complete story, see the Edo-period Takada-ha biography, *Shinran Shōnin shōtoden* (1715): see Alfred Bloom 1968:12 f. Shinran’s dream here is very interesting for a psychoanalytic study of his “identity crisis” and struggle with his own sexuality. On the Chinese religious view of dreams, see **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (3.4.4.3).

²⁵ Jaffe 2001:51. For this trend in Shinran’s biography, see Dobbins 1990.

²⁶ Hirata 1996:113 f; Jaffe 2001:51.

²⁷ *Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*, sv. Psychologically, a defence here is an *unconscious* reaction, the working of the latent tendencies (*anusaya*)—lust (*rāga*), aversion (*paṭigha*), and ignorance (*avijjā*)—towards a perceived threat or frustration of desire. On defence mechanism, see **Gadrabha Samaṇa S** (A 3.81/1:229) = SD 24.10b (2). On latent tendencies, see **Anusaya** SD 31.3 & **The unconscious** = SD 17.8b.

²⁸ *Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*, sv

²⁹ *Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*, sv

³⁰ On the calligraphic frontispiece of his book, *Bukkyō fūfu ron* (1994), the Nichiren ex-cleric, Tanaka Chigaku [3.7.1.2], wrote *Hotoke wa shibito ni arasu*, “Buddha is not a dead person!”: see Jaffe 2001:176.

³¹ On the Buddha’s deification, see also **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (3.3).

ese society and times—the threat of Christianity and the west, government distancing from local religion, and pervasive natural disasters [2.1.4.6]—only aggravated the already severely tested Japanese psyche. The deification can, as such, be seen as a *compensation* against such frustrating and unacceptable conditions.

Another useful psychological concept applicable here is that of Austrian-born British psychoanalyst, **Melanie Klein**'s notion of manic defence.³² The English psychoanalyst, **Donald Winnicott**, in her detailed study of manic defences suggested that the notion of Christ's ascension as an example of manic defence of an "ascensive" nature, psychological akin to light-headedness and elation:

"Each year the average Christian tastes the depths of sadness, despair, hopelessness, in the Good Friday experiences. The average Christian cannot hold the depression so long, and so he goes over into a manic phase on Easter Sunday" (Winnicott 1975:135).

Another example of manic defence in religion is when an aspect of reality is not acknowledged, such as when "a preacher [who] feels as if God speaks through him," but denies his own "parenthood of the internalized object" (Winnicott 1975:133).

On the other hand, if Kakunyo had *consciously* introduced or accepted the idea that his great grandfather Shinran was Amida, then it would probably be either a delusion of grandeur or perhaps a wishful religious spin. After all, believers would love the object of their faith and adoration to be a bigger-than-life figure.

A caveat should be clearly made here. Such psychoanalyses here are only suggestive at best, before some in-depth study, such as that of Erik Erikson's classic psychobiography of *Young Man Luther* (1958) [2.1.4.5]. Nevertheless, the nature and psychology of religion is much better understood today than ever before, so that we need to carefully evaluate our own religious beliefs and actions, and constantly ask ourselves such questions as: "What am I learning from all this? What is this religion doing to me? Am I more happy? Am I more in control of my emotions? Do I understand myself and others better? Am I relating to people better?"

Shinran, like any sectarian teacher, is like a tiny piece of sand in the oyster of his disciples who accreted their own layers of theological spin until it becomes a shiny pearl. Although no two pearls are exactly alike, it takes an experienced eye to note this. There are, however, many pearls around, of varying quality and value, some even worthless as they easily break up. While cultured pearls are more easily available, the most valuable, of course, are the pure natural pearls. The Buddha's true teaching, like a single rare natural pearl, is of supreme value, outshining all others.

2.1.4.5 THEISTIC RESEMBLANCES. Shinran's life history in the style of **Erik Erikson**'s psychobiography, *Young Man Luther* (1958), a classic in the study of "identity crisis" (a term he coined), would be a valuable contribution to our understanding of religion and sexuality. Like Luther, Shinran (living some 300 years earlier), too, was ridden with sexual feelings and guilt. Both married in due course,³³ and brought about some form of laicization in their respective faiths.

The German theologian **Karl Barth** in his *Church Dogmatics* (German 1932; English translation 1936) has noted a striking resemblance between the Amida pietism and evangelical piety of the Christians. This is a positive statement if we consider that Buddhism as a living religion is so protean as to be able to freely accommodate and answer various spiritual needs of specific societies and times.

Trevor Ling is of the opinion that both Amidism and Zen are more correctly described as "Japanese religions." They can hardly be called Buddhist except in so far as historically their roots were in a Buddhist tradition. "Amidism is about as much as an authentic form of Buddhism as the sect of Jehovah's Witnesses is an authentic form of Christianity" (*A History of Religion East and West*, 1968:315).

³² Klein's enriched the Freudian conception of mania by adding the idea of the subject's feelings of guilt concerning the disappearance and destruction of the object. The manic subject tends to downplay the power of the object, to disdain it, while at the same time maintaining maximum control over objects. Manic defenses are typified by three feelings, namely, control, triumph, contempt (*International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis: Manic defenses*). See also Klein 1940.

³³ In 1525, 41-year-old Luther the nun 26-year-old Katharina von Bora

2.1.4.6 NATURE'S INTERVENTION. The shoguns first rose to supreme power over Japan in the Kamakura period (1185-1333), but it was an age of disunity and violence, but also a time when Buddhism flourished in Japan. This was the era of Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212),³⁴ Dōgen (1200-1253)³⁵ and Nichiren (1212-1282).³⁶ It was also a time of deepening pessimism on account of various natural disasters, social turmoil, political upheavals and other pestilences [2.1.3.3].

The end of the Tokugawa was also marked by similar troubles and disasters [2.2]. Just as in 1192, the first shogun was appointed by the emperor (then only a figurehead), in 1869, the Tokugawa shogun's forces were defeated by the pro-imperial army.

2.1.5 Arrival of the westerners

2.1.5.1 RELIGIOUS DIVIDE AND RULE. Two major groups of westerners arrived in Japan in pre-modern time. The first were the Europeans (1543), and 300 years later the US Americans (1854). In 1498, the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached India. Within 50 years, in 1543, the Portuguese had reached an island off the southern coast of Kyushu. By 1545, they were trading actively in ports in other parts of Kyushu.

In 1549, the Jesuit priest Francis Xavier began a major missionary effort in Japan. By 1615, perhaps as many as half a million Japanese had become converts. However, probably many of them were motivated by their interest in trade and their general curiosity rather than genuine religious conviction. Nobunaga encouraged the Portuguese as *a counterweight against Buddhist power* and was also *motivated by the hope of trade profits*.

In 1573, Nobunaga drove the last Ashikaga shogun out of Kyoto. To consolidate his power, he went on to destroy the great Tendai monastery of Enryaku-ji on Mt. Hiei. Having subdued the Buddhist monastic centres in the capital, he went on to take over the fortified headquarters of the Shin Buddhists at Kaya on the west coast. Then he laid siege to the Shin branch castle at Osaka and captured it in 1580.

2.1.5.2 "THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY." Unlike the Chinese and Indians, the Japanese, as a small community of remote and less developed people, were far more open to new ideas, even of foreign origins. The 16th century, sometimes called "Japan's Christian Century," saw significant numbers of Christian converts as well as flourishing trade with Europeans, centred in Nagasaki, Osaka, Edo (Tokyo) and other ports. The shogun Hideyoshi at first welcomed the Christian missionaries and the profitable trade with the Portuguese.

Earlier Portuguese missionaries in Japan were told that if Christianity was, as they asserted, the only true religion, it would long have been known to and adopted by the Chinese. This helped convince the Jesuits, like **Matteo Ricci** (1552-1610), to try to convert the Chinese first, as a key to the rest of East Asia, but as history witnessed, that effort failed mainly due to the human weakness of the church at its highest levels.

The foreigners were rivals with each other in both trade and missionary effort, and they took sides in internal conflicts. Japanese converts also developed loyalties to a foreign pope, and the Catholics themselves were split among various orders: Franciscan, Dominican, Augustinian and Jesuit, who contested with each other.

The Spanish, already established in the Philippines, tended to support the Franciscans; the Portuguese the Jesuits, and all four orders quarreled bitterly with each other. Following their usual strategy, the Jes-

³⁴ **Hōnen** was a religious reformer and founder of the first independent branch of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism: see (3.3), under Jōdo Shinshū.

³⁵ **Dōgen Zenji** 道元禪師: after studying Caodong, in China, he introduced into Japan as Sōtō Zen in 1227.

³⁶ **Nichiren** 日蓮 was a Japanese Buddhist monk of the Kamakura period who taught devotion to the Lotus Sutra (Jap *Myōhō Renge Kyō*) as the exclusive means of enlightenment and the chanting in honour of its name, *Nam myōhō renge kyō*, as the essential practice of the teaching. Nichiren Buddhism today comprises various schools with diverging interpretations of Nichiren's teachings. See Piyasilo, *Nichiren: The new Buddhism of modern Japan*, Malaysia, 1988d.

uits concentrated on the elite, and even converted some of the daimyos,³⁷ and later some of Hideyoshi's retinue.

The Spanish plotted against the Portuguese, and both were mortal enemies of the Dutch and the English (both were Protestants anyway). All of them had then reached Japan. It was understandable that Hideyoshi feared that the foreign missionaries were an advance guard for foreign political aggression.

In 1587, Hideyoshi banned the missionaries, but this order was not enforced for some years. He seemed to have feared that the spread of Christianity was becoming a disruptive influence in Japanese society and also a political menace.

In 1597, he officially banned Christianity and crucified 6 Spanish Franciscans, 3 Jesuits and 17 Japanese converts, though many Jesuits remained in hiding. However, he did not go further for fear of losing out in the trade with the Portuguese, which had also become an important source of technical knowledge, especially about firearms, and as the supply route for Chinese goods.

2.1.6 The Tokugawa period (1600-1868)

2.1.6.1 POLICING THE MONASTICS. When Hideyoshi died, a power struggle ensued amongst his former vassals. After a decisive victory at Sekigahara in 1600, **Tokugawa Ieyasu** (1543-1616) ushered in Japan's longest period of peace and stability that lasted until the end of the shogunate in 1868. But Tokugawa Japan was still a feudal system closed to the outside world. In fact, the feudal system was becoming even more rigid and more effectively controlled from the centre of the shogun's power at Edo (modern Tokyo).

From 1630s onwards, in their effort to exterminate the Christians, whom they astutely saw as looming political and social threat, the Tokugawa government formed a religious inquisition (*shūmon aratame*) and used the nationwide Buddhist temple network as their policing system by way of the *danka* and the *terauke* systems.

In a system, in use since the Heian period, known as *danka*, more fully, 檀家制度 *danka seido* (from Sanskrit *dāna, pati*, literally, “master giver,” that is, “lay supporter” and *ka* 家 Japanese for “house”), all Japanese had to register periodically at Buddhist temples. A *danka* identified a family that requested a particular Buddhist temple to conduct all its funeral, memorial, and other services in exchange for which it offered remuneration and partial provision for the upkeep of the temple.

2.1.6.2 POLICING THE PEOPLE. In addition to the *danka*, the Tokugawa authorities introduced the *terauke* (temple guarantee) system to seek out the adherents of the proscribed Christianity faith, but it had a wider effect of the surveillance of the entire population. A certificate of affiliation with a Buddhist temple was required as proof that a suspect was not a Christian. In 1665, the shogunate ordered a detailed scrutiny of the population, “listing the name of the temple that stood as guarantee of each person's religion.”

At birth every person was enrolled as a parishioner of his family's temple and the register was forwarded to the lord of the domain. The temple attestation was also required prior to marriage, travel, change of residence, or entry into service.

The *terauke* system 寺請制度 *terauke seido* (*tera*, “temple” and *uke*, “certificate”) was also used against other proscribed religious groups, such as the uncompromising Fūjū Fuse (“not giving, not receiving”) sect of Nichiren Buddhism from 1669. The system collapsed along with the Tokugawa shogunate in the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

Clearly, the Tokugawa had bitter experiences with the missionaries and did not want to repeat their mistake. The Tokugawa proscription of Christianity was not totally effective. Those few who escaped, went underground and kept Christianity alive until the appearance of Western missionaries in the 1860s.³⁸ “The Japanese purging of dangerous missionaries and their military arms was not a ‘Buddhist’ policy. The Catholic insurrection involvement was a Christian strategy.”³⁹

2.2 THE BAKUMATSU ERA. Within slightly over a decade, Japan would switch from feudalism to a

³⁷ A *daimyō* 大名 (ie, *dai* 大 “large” + *myō* from *myōden* 名田 “private land”), a powerful warlord who ruled his own vast hereditary domain, subservient only to the shogun, hereditary military dictators. They existed in Japan from the 10th to mid-19th century.

³⁸ On the *Kakure Kirishitan*, “hidden Christians,” see **Cañki S** (M 95) @ SD 21.15 (3.3.3.3).

³⁹ Dan Lusthaus, Buddha-L email 7 Nov 2007.

market economy. This period was known as **Bakumatsu** 幕末 (literally, “end of the curtain”), referring to the late Tokugawa shogunate,⁴⁰ that is, the tumultuous final decade or so (1853-1867) of the Edo period, when the Tokugawa shogunate came to an end. Its major events marked the transition from a feudal shogunate to the Meiji imperial government and the ending of Japan’s isolationist foreign policy (*sakoku* 鎖国 “locked country”). How did this ending start?

In 1854, the US **Commodore Matthew Perry**,⁴¹ with a fleet of black-hulled steam frigate (the “black ships”),⁴² armed with the latest Paixhans shell guns, sailed into Edo (Tokyo) Bay, and in due course had Japan sign the Convention of Kanagawa, which was similar to ones China had signed earlier on. The treaty opened the Japanese ports of Shimoda⁴³ and Hakodate⁴⁴ to the United States. Although the Americans did not establish any permanent residence in these places, except for a consulate in Shimoda, the arrival of Perry’s fleet marked the end of Japan’s 200-year policy of isolation.⁴⁵

Soon with the arrival and incursions of other western powers, Japan began to feel their crippling impact on her economics. In 1860, Japan lost some 4 million ryō, about 70 tons, of gold to foreigners, resulting in the breakdown of the Tokugawa monetary system. Politics-wise, in 1863, the *mikado*, emperor Kōmei, broke centuries of traditions by taking the unprecedented step in issuing “an order to expel barbarians” 攘夷実行の勅命 *jōi jikkō no chokumei*). The foreigners brought in cholera which killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese. Furthermore, major famines increased food prices drastically and worsened general hardship.

During the 1860s, the number of peasant uprisings (*hyakushō ikki*) and urban disturbances (*uchikowashi*) grew. Such troubling times became fertile ground for the rise of numerous “world renewal” (*yonaooshi ikki*) groups, and escapist activities, such as the hysterical communal religious carnival known as the Ee ja nai ka (ええじゃないか literally, “Isn’t that great?” or “Why Not?”).⁴⁶

The Bakufu 幕府 or shogunate administration, in a desperate effort to learn western culture and rise up to it, sent several missions overseas to the west, and even set up embassies in the US (1860) and Europe (1862), attempted to revise her unequal treaties, and delay the opening of cities and harbour to foreign trade. These efforts towards revision remained largely unsuccessful.

During the years of turmoil that follow, the weakened Tokugawa shogunate was finally destroyed by forces loyal to the emperor. In 1868, the teenaged Matsuhito was enthroned as the Meiji emperor, usher-

⁴⁰ The Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1868), also known as Tokugawa bakufu 徳川幕府 or Edo bakufu 江戸幕府, was a feudal regime of Japan founded by Tokugawa Ieyasu. It is so called because its capital was at Edo, called Tokyo after 1868. When the shogunate ended, it was followed by the Meiji Restoration.

⁴¹ Perry first visited Japan on 8 July 1853. He went to the capital, Edo (now Tokyo), and made demands that ports be opened to Americans, that prisoners be treated well and given back, etc. The Japanese rejected his demands. There were at least 3 reasons for US interest in Japan, which is on the same latitude as San Francisco: (1) as a “coal-ing base,” where steamships, using coal, could restock their coal, supplies, water, etc; (2) ensure that shipwrecked US sailors were well treated in Japan (unlike before); and (3) to benefit from a lucrative with other countries. <http://www.history.navy.mil/branches/teach/ends/opening.htm> & <http://www.grifworld.com/perryhome.html>.

⁴² The “black ships” 黒船 *kurofune* (an Edo-period term) referred, in retrospect, to western vessels arriving in Japan in from 16th to 19th cent. The Portuguese, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, and reaching Goa, India, were the first Europeans to arrive in Japan, at Nagasaki in 1543. *Kurofune*, however, originally particularly referred to the American ships, *Mississippi*, *Plymouth*, *Saratoga*, and *Susquehanna*, that arrived on 14 July 1853 at Uruga Harbour (part of present-day Yokosuka) in Kanagawa Prefecture, under the command of Perry. “Black” refers to the colour of the older sailing vessels, and the black smoke from the coal-fired engines of these ships. In this sense, *kurofune* symbolized the ending of Japan’s isolation.

⁴³ 97 mi = 60 km SW of Tokyo.

⁴⁴ In the centre of Kameda peninsula, near the southern tip of the northern main island of Hokkaido.

⁴⁵ Perry’s success was mainly due to his diplomacy in convincing the Japanese that he represented US interests which were very different from those of the earlier Europeans and had no plans to bring Christianity into Japan: see Farge 2007.

⁴⁶ See George M Wilson 1992:98, 103, 105, & <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eejanaika>.

ing in the period of the Meiji Restoration (1868-1889).⁴⁷ This marks the end of feudalism in Japan and the beginning of her market economy and rise into the modern era.

2.3 STATE REGULATION OF TEMPLES. Beginning in 1872, the Meiji Grand Council of State introduced various laws “liberalizing” monastic Buddhism in Japan [2.4]. The purpose of this was to keep *religion separate from the state* so that Buddhism did not in any way threaten the authorities as it has done before right from the time of its arrival. One of the most drastic measures in this direction was the attempted annihilation of the Jōdo Shin by Oda Nobunaga [2.1.3.2]. Somehow even his most draconian efforts (such as burning down their castle-temples) failed to uproot the power of the Buddhist clergy. During the Meiji period, however, the authorities worked, often by trial and error, in fits and starts, to neutralize clerical power, and in the long run, their efforts worked. The rest of this survey will basically explore how this happened and discuss its significance, especially the disempowerment and secularization of the Buddhism in Japan.

It should first be noted that the Meiji authorities did not, at first, specifically aim at neutralizing Buddhist clerical power. Their overarching concern was mainly the incursions from western powers and Christianity [2.1.5], and in due course the unequal treaties they exacted on Japan [2.2]. The authorities had to mobilize every resource they had to prevent the nation from being destabilized, even destroyed.

In Japan itself, the authorities tried to mobilize the traditionally powerful Buddhist clerics in the agenda of nationalism and modernization. They had to carefully work to remove the power, privileges and wealth of the clerics. Up to the Tokugawa period, the clerics were regarded as a privileged social class of their own, who were free from conscription, corvee, and taxation. In fact, the major Buddhist denominations, especially the Jōdo Shin, were extremely powerful, each with their own temple-castles, *shoen* (landed estate) holdings⁴⁸ and private priest armies 僧兵 *sōhei*.⁴⁹

Even before 1872, throughout most of that period, the authorities regularly introduced and enforced various laws and measures to keep errant clerics in check. From numerous official records, we know that fornication, meat-eating, liquor consumption, quarrels and other transgressions were common amongst the clerics and that the authorities had a hard time controlling the clergy. Nevertheless, the laws were there and should the ecclesiastical authorities themselves need to discipline their own kind, they could apply both their own laws or turn the secular authorities for assistance.

After 1872, the Meiji authorities turned the table on the Buddhist authorities themselves. First, their power and privileges were gradually removed. Ordination no more brought them special privileges life before. They must now revert to having surnames like the non-clerics. The Edo-period temple household registration system [3.4] was abandoned. By the Jinshin Koseki law (May 1871), even the clerics must now register directly with the government [3.4.2]. Such moves effectively secularized the clerics and weakened Japanese Buddhism as a spiritual force, the effects of which are seen even today.⁵⁰

2.4 NIK UJIKI SAITAI. In 1872, the Meiji government promulgated unprecedented laws that radically affected monastic Buddhism in Japan. On 1 May 1872 (Meiji 5/4/25),⁵¹ the Grand Council of State gazetted the so-called **the *nikujiki saitai*** 肉食妻帯 (“meat-eating and marriage”). The law says: “[F]rom now on Buddhist clerics shall be free to eat meat, marry, grow their hair, and so on. Furthermore, they are per-

⁴⁷ See http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/content.cfm/the_meiji_restoration_era_1868-1889.

⁴⁸ A *shōen* 莊園 or 庄園 was a field or manor in mediaeval Japan, and came from the Tang dynasty term *zhuang-yuan*. From about the 8th to the late 15th cent, they were private, tax-free, often autonomous, estates or manors whose rise undermined the political and economic power of the emperor and contributed to the growth of powerful local clans, headed by the shoguns and daimyos. By the end of the Heian period, virtually all Japan was *shōen*, until the beginning of the 17th century, when Japan was unified under the Tokugawa Ieyasu (1600). See Hall 1983:29 *shoen*.

⁴⁹ See **Cult Buddhism** = SD 34.5 (1.2.4).

⁵⁰ In China, the first Ming emperor officially banned Vinaya ceremonies to curb the Chinese clerics: see **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b2 (2.3.7).

⁵¹ Jaffe, in his book (2001:xvi), have for the refs to the first 5 years of the Meiji era, ie, Meiji 1-5 (1868-1872) parenthetically provided the commercial calendar dates to facilitate ref to Japanese sources. Meiji dates before 1 Jan 1873 are abbreviated Meiji year/month/day followed by the commercial date in parentheses. All conversions to western dates are based on Yuasa 1990.

mitted to wear ordinary clothing when not engaged in religious activities” (Jaffe 2001:72). It lifted the ban on clerical marriage, meat-eating, and the wearing of civvies (non-clerical garb) by the Buddhist clergy.

On 16 Oct 1872 (Meiji 5/9/14), the Grand Council of State further proclaimed that Japanese clerics require clerical surnames, and are to register them with the government by the end of the year (Jaffe 2001: 74). Such laws symbolized one aspect of Japan’s attempts at modernization—the separation of religion from state, as influenced by the West. At the same time, this law actively contradicted renunciant, or “home-leaver,” Buddhism (*shukke bukkyo* 出家佛教), because its doctrines made no allowance for clerical marriage and meat-eating.

Those of who are familiar with Buddhist monasticism as being founded in celibacy, the phenomenon of male clerical marriage in contemporary Japan is surely surprising, even shocking. **Richard M Jaffe**, in his book, *Neither Monk Nor Layman: Clerical marriage in modern Japanese Buddhism* (2001), is a well-documented historical study that helps to explain the complex context that gave rise to this development in Japanese Buddhism. Although a few Japanese scholars, such as Hori Ichiro (1966) and Kawahashi Noriko (1995), have examined some of same issues as Jaffe, none have his book’s historical wealth.

Jaffe’s investigation, historically centred on the 1872 Meiji decree, begins his study by examining some evidence found as early as the 16th century, tracing developments through the Edo Period (1600–1867), highlighting key events in the Meiji Period (1868–1911), through the start of the Pacific War in the late 1930s, and outlining their complexities right down to the 1990s.

2.5 THE STATE OF JAPANESE BUDDHISM TODAY. In Japan of the 21st century (at the time of writing), marriage and the family are the rule for all but a minority of temples that are reserved for monastic training. The Sōtō Zen,⁵² for example, some 14,000 temples, only 31 are reserved for strict monastic training.⁵³ The great majority of the Sōtō temples have a cleric and his family.

According to Jaffe, the same ratio is true between training monasteries and local temples for most other Buddhist denominations today as well. The Japanese are so used to the idea of clerical marriage that they now prefer having a married cleric serve as abbot of their temple. According to a 1993 Sōtō denomination survey, only 5 percent of the Sōtō laity explicitly preferred an unmarried cleric. An overwhelming 73 percent preferred a married cleric, with the rest of the survey group not expressing any preference.⁵⁴ Although there are no similar statistics for other Japanese schools, considering the broad similarities of married and unmarried clerics, says Jaffe, “it is likely that this statistic reflects a general Japanese attitude towards the Buddhist clergy.” (2001:2).

While in pre-Meiji Japan, only the Jōdo Shin clerics openly married and have families, it is relatively new to openly see the family cleric in non-Jōdo Shin and non-Shugendō⁵⁵ denominations in Japan, dating only from the start of the Meiji period (1868–1912). As **Faure** has shown, it is clear, from historical re-

⁵² **Sōtō Zen.** Along with Rinzai (*Rinzai shū* 臨濟宗 Chin *Línjì zōng*) and Ōbaku (*Ōbaku shū* 黃檗宗 Chin *Huángbò zōng*), **Sōtō** (曹洞宗 Chin *Cáodòng zōng*) is one of the three biggest sects of Zen in Japanese Buddhism. Caodong was first established in the 9th cent (Tang dynasty) in China, and was introduced into Japan as Sōtō Zen by Dōgen Zenji 道元禪師 (1200–1253) in the 13th cent. In 1244, he founded Daibutsuji on Mt Kichijo; two years later, it was renamed Eihiji. O his teachings, he stressed on sitting meditation (*zazen*). See **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b.5 (5.1.2.4) & (5.3.2).

⁵³ Foulk 1988:164.

⁵⁴ Odawara 1993:95 f; cited in Kawahashi 1995:162 & Jaffe 2001:1 f.

⁵⁵ **Shugendō** 修験道 is a highly syncretic Buddhism-based spiritist tradition which originated in pre-feudal Japan. Its key belief is that enlightenment is attaining oneness with the *kami* 神, which occurs through the understanding of the relationship between Man and Nature, centered on an ascetic, mountain-dwelling practice. It included aspects of Old Shinto and folk animism, and in due course incorporated teachings from Daoism and esoteric Buddhism when they arrived in Japan. The 7th-cent ascetic and mystic En no Gyōja 役行者 (b 634) is often regarded as having first systematized Shugendō. (Picken 1994:199). *Shugendō Now*, a film directed by Jean-Marc Abela & produced by Mark P McGuire, Montréal: Empower Prods, 2009, 88 minutes, Jap with narration; English, French, Spanish subtitles and narration. Rev by Heather Blair, *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 18, 2011: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/files/2011/06/JBE-Blair.pdf>.

cords, that for much of the pre-modern period, significant numbers of clerics had broken the monastic rule again sexual relations and marriage (1998).

3 Academic studies of social changes in modern Japanese Buddhism

3.0 VALUE OF SCHOLARLY STUDIES. Two critical issues generally dominate contemporary Japanese Buddhism: changing attitudes towards funerary care and clerical marriage. **Richard Jaffe**, in his *Neither Monk Nor Layman*, describes how the issue of clerical marriage came to dominate Japanese Buddhism up to the early 21st century. His analysis of the interaction between the Meiji state and Buddhist organizations is valuable to those interested in state-religion issues specifically, and to the fields of Japanese Studies and Buddhology generally.

Stephen Covell's *Japanese Temple Buddhism* (2005) is a good of organization and practice in contemporary Japanese Buddhism. He examines how it came to be seen as a religion of funeral practices; how Buddhist institutions envision the role of the laity; and how a married clergy has affected life at temples and the image of priests. Using his years of field research and training as a Tendai priest, Covell rejects the “corruption paradigm” while revealing the many (often contradictory) facets of contemporary temple Buddhism, he calls it.

Covell significantly broadens the scope of inquiry to include how Buddhism is approached by both laity and clerics when he takes into account temple families, community involvement, and religious commodification. He discusses law and tax issues, temple strikes, and the politics of temple boards of directors, to shed light on how temples are run and viewed by their inmates, supporters, and society in general. His insights reveals how such economic realities often shape ritual practices, and how mundane factors such as taxes influence the debate over temple Buddhism’s role in contemporary Japan. Through interviews, and analyses of sectarian literature and recent scholarship on gender, he discusses in detail how temple wives are indispensable in the running of temples.

More recently, **Mitsutoshi Horii** gives us a good overview on the “Deprofessionalisation of Buddhist priests in contemporary Japan” (2006). Mitsutoshi’s paper was presented before a meeting of the Association for the Study of Religion, Economics, and Culture (ASREC) in Rochester, NY, in 2005. She uses the “deprofessionalization” model to examine the changes that the Buddhist clerics of Japanese are facing in recent times. As such, his study is relevant to our own times.

3.1 THE KEY ISSUE AND ITS ROOTS. Jaffe’s book is divided into ten chapters.⁵⁶ In the first, the Introduction, he points out the contemporary prevalence of clerical marriage, focussing on the Sōtō Zen school [2.4]. He compares this practice with that of other Buddhist monastic systems elsewhere. Such a practice, he concludes, is clearly an anomaly, when compared to the rest of the Buddhist world, and this is because of the *nikujiki saitai* law. This controversy is still unresolved even today. Jaffe then gives a summary of the other nine chapters.

3.2 THE MEIJI BACKGROUND. In chapter 2, “Pre-Meiji Precedents,” he describes the origin of the notion of *nikujiki saitai* in **the pre-Meiji era**. This origin is set against the historical background of strict formal conduct by all the Buddhist denominations—except the Jōdo Shin denomination which already engaged in clerical marriage—that was imposed by **the Tokugawa shogunate** was not for the sake of purifying Buddhism, but in order to maintain greater control of these worldly clerics.

The great unifiers of the Japanese nation—Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616)—had to break the military power of large temple castles at Mt Hiei and the Hongan-ji, the most powerful of the Pure Land sects, so that they were forced to accept an unprecedented degree of religious control and secular discipline by the temporal authorities.⁵⁷

Jaffe discusses the evidence for clerical marriage, and lays the background to the Meiji debates over the legalization of clerical marriage, and later debates over the impact that clerical marriage could have on the Buddhist establishment. He pays special attention to the state’s role in overseeing Buddhist clerical conduct. In 1584, for example, Hideyoshi issued a regulation for Daitoku-ji for the enforcement of disci-

⁵⁶ The sections in this chapter generally follows that of Jaffe 2001, with additional discussion and information.

⁵⁷ For a detailed study of the destruction of the military power of such temples, see McMullin 1984:236-283.

pline in the temple.⁵⁸ His successor, Toyotomi Hidetsugu (1568-1595), too, introduced a law to all temples prohibiting fornication and meat-eating (*nyobon nikujiki*) by the clergy.⁵⁹

After a brief report on pre-Meiji clerical relations, he examines **the Edo period status system** (*mibun seido*) [ch 4] and how it is used as a *state control of clerical celibacy*. The existence of Edo laws on clerical marriage only served to highlight clerical transgressions of religious celibacy, inviting criticisms from the traditional Buddhists.

Throughout the Edo period, the Tokugawa and local rulers issued numerous temple regulations (*jiin hatto*) governing clerical conduct, which grew increasingly specific and draconian.⁶⁰ The general Tokugawa strategy was to strengthen the head-branch temple system (*honmatsu seido*), creating a clergy that was precept-abiding and devoted to scholarship and practice, and restraining those outside such an arrangement.⁶¹

The real concern of the Tokugawa authorities was that clerical marriages would consolidate the power of the temples, such as their being passed down through the family, and the formation of alliances amongst such temples. In other words, they wanted to prevent the temples from meddling in politics or creating social disorder.

The ban on clerical consumption of meat was not so much concern for Buddhist teachings as it was a concern for ritual purity. During Tokugawa times, no fish, birds or animals were allowed into temple or shrine⁶² premises, nor killing allowed there nor in the temple or shrine proximity and on sacred mountains.⁶³ The Shintoists believed that meat-eating was polluting (*kegare*) and improper for the land of the *kami* (god, spirit, divinity).⁶⁴ The rationale of the authorities, however, was more practical than religious. Cattle and horses, for example, were protected as they were valuable for farming and the military.⁶⁵ The Japanese denominations themselves were predominantly Mahāyāna, which, as a rule, prohibits the taking of meat, intoxicants and pungent roots (garlic, onion, leek), as they might stimulate sexual desire.⁶⁶

Complaints about clerical breaches of such dietary restraints were common, as shown by this 10th-century criticism: “All of them [the Buddhist clergy] keep wives and children in their homes; they eat fish and meat (*kuchi ni seisen o kurau*). Their appearance resembles monks, but in their hearts they are like butchers.”⁶⁷

Further, it should be noted that the large, wealthy and powerful Jōdo Shin had close ties with the shogun, so that its clerics were allowed to engaged in prohibited activities, such as marriage and meat-eating, while these were forbidden for most of the other Buddhist clerics. Understandably this caused much jealousy and frustration amongst those Buddhist under the law, so that they often attacked the Shin clergy.

3.3 THE EDO PERIOD

3.3.1 The power of the Jōdo Shin-shu. Chapter 3, “Jōdo Shin Buddhism and the Edo Period Debate over *Nikujiki Saitai*,” discusses how, while the other Buddhist schools were strictly regimented in the Edo period, the authorities allowed Shin ministers to marry, which was strongly criticized by other Buddhists. Tokugawa Ieyasu had good reasons to fear the Pure Land Buddhists, especially the Hongan-ji sect.

Under **Rennyō** (1415-1499), it had grown formidably large.⁶⁸ The Hongan-ji had not only consolidated itself by having its temples handed down from father to son, but marriages amongst members of differ-

⁵⁸ Ishikawa 1996:64 f.

⁵⁹ Tsuji 1944-1955 7:330-332.

⁶⁰ Punishments of sexual transgressors included imprisonment, the pillory, public exposure, banishment, crucifixion, and execution. See Jaffe 2001:23-25.

⁶¹ Tamamuro 1987:25. For details on the Tokugawa *hattos*, see Tsuji 1944-55 8:173-324.

⁶² “Shrine” here refers to a Shinto shrine.

⁶³ See Jaffe 2001:27-33.

⁶⁴ Harada 1993:265.

⁶⁵ Hanley 1997:65 f.

⁶⁶ See SD 4.24 (3.2).

⁶⁷ *Sanzen seigyō* 914, in Kuroda 1980:250.

⁶⁸ Amstutz 1997:21-24.

ent congregations further proved especially strategic for Rennyō, who himself had 27 children with five wives.⁶⁹

When Kyōnyō (1558-1614) was removed as head of the Hongan-ji by Hideyoshi in 1593, Ieyasu offered him (the former) a piece of land for a temple. Doing so, he caused a split in the denomination, dividing it into the Nishi Hongan-ji and the Higashi Hongan-ji in 1602. Despite this split, the Shin Buddhists remained strong through *sheer numbers* and their *centralized organization*. Thus, during the two most active periods of religious legislation in the 17th century, the Shin denomination was not issued a single regulation (*hato*),⁷⁰ so that they conducted their own affairs as they pleased.

The other Buddhists, aware of this discrepancy, often spoke out against the Shin Buddhists. In 1669, for example, Ōbaku cleric **Tetsugen Dōkō** (1630-1682),⁷¹ in a series of lecture on the Ryōgon-gyō 楞嚴經 Śūraṅgama Sūtra (to raise funds for printing a new edition of the Buddhist canon) criticized the Shin practice of allowing meat-eating and clerical marriage, and stressed on the importance of keeping the monastic precepts. This angered the Shin clerics in the audience, and a public debate ensued, and the Shin debater was bested by him.⁷² Tetsugen described the Shin Buddhists as follows:

Those of the Ikkō denomination [as the Shin were known then] enter into the ranks of the monks, but they are laypeople. However, they shave their heads and wear Buddhist robes. One is called *bhikṣu* because one receives and upholds the precepts. But they break the precepts, so they are said to be lay people. Thus those of the Ikkō denomination are not monks, they are what Śākya-muni called bats. (Ishakawa 1996:93)

The critics of the Shin Buddhists called them “bats”—animals that are neither fully birds nor rats—that is, “bat monks” (*chōse biku*), alluding to Shinran’s controversial statement that he is “neither monk nor layman” [3.2.10]. This allusion is found in the Butsuzō-kyō 仏藏經 The Buddha Store Sūtra (T 17.788c).⁷³

3.3.2 Jōdo Shin apologetics

3.3.2.1 CHIKŪ’S RHETORIC. As a case study of the debate over clerical marriage, Jaffe gives the example of the Jōdo Shin-shū,⁷⁴ the only Buddhist sect to openly practice clerical marriage, and which had long been criticized by other Buddhists for its teachings and practices, especially clerical marriage. Here, he draws on a wealth of sources on clerical debate. In particular, he draws on the apologetic works of **Chikū** 智空 (1634-1718), the second head scholar at the Shin seminary at the Nishi Hongan-ji, to show how Shin clerics defended their stand on clerical marriage.

Chiku went to a lot of trouble to defend the practices of clerical marriage and meat-eating of the Shin clerics. After a details account of the great prosperity of the Shin community, he pointed to the tattiness, poverty and corruption in the other denominations, implying that the Shine were keeping up with the times, while they were outdated.⁷⁵ He listed those cases of alleged celibacy involving illustrious names of “fallen monks,” such as Kumārajīva (343-413),⁷⁶ Kuiji (632-682),⁷⁷ and Nichiren (1222-1282).⁷⁸ He

⁶⁹ Dobbins 1989:117; Solomon 1997:195.

⁷⁰ On the Higashi Honganji’s alliance with Tokugawa Ieyasu, see Jaffe 2001:36 f.

⁷¹ On Tetsugen Dōkō, see Baroni 2006.

⁷² Jaffe 2001:39-42.

⁷³ Faure 1998:155; Jaffe 2001:42.

⁷⁴ **Jōdo Shinshū** 浄土真宗 “True Pure Land School,” founded by the former Tendai Japanese monk, Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1263), pupil of Hōnen 法然 (1133-1212), religious reformer and founder of the first independent branch of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism. Today, the Jōdo Shin, due mostly to its lay orientation, is the largest Buddhist group in Japanese Buddhism.

⁷⁵ Jaffe 2001:45.

⁷⁶ Kumārajīva was a Kucha (Central Asia) monk, scholar, and translator who settled in Chang’an 長安, the imperial capital of China. He is mostly remembered for the prolific translation of Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Chinese in the later part of his life. It was said that when Kumārajīva arrived in Chang-an (401), the emperor honored him as the Imperial Teacher and forced him to marry ten women for the purpose of producing descendants of his calibre. But by then he was already 58 years old!

claimed that there was widespread meat-eating and clerical marriage amongst the clerics of other denominations,⁷⁹ and reported various accounts of salacious rumours of other clerics of his time.⁸⁰

Chikū quoted Sutra and Vinaya passages that allow the use of animal fat as medicine, and the texts of different Buddhist periods, such as a passage in the *Shibunritsu* 四分律 (the 4-limbed Vinaya of the Dharma, guptaka) relating to consumption of meat that is pure in three ways,⁸¹ and another from the Daishūkyō 大集經 (*Mahā Saṃnipāta Sūtra) which predicts the proliferation of clerical marriage.⁸² At one point, Chikū even wrote, almost resignedly, but quite tellingly, “when we help those who are in the mud, we cannot help that person unless we, too, get muddy.”⁸³ [3.3.2.2.]

Another key rhetoric in Shin apologetics was that of *timeliness*. The other schools, they claimed, failed because their practices, including their views on clerical marriage, were “not suitable” to the times — which is of course the “modernization” thesis. In later chapters, Jaffe examines arguments by clerics of the Meiji period who also used the rhetoric of “timeliness” to support clerical in their own times. Jaffe closes this chapter by stating that the issue of clerical marriage would be used by anti-Buddhist groups in the late Edo and early Meiji “as a pretext for closing temples and forcefully laicizing clerics.” In this, he echoes the works of scholars such as James Ketelaar (1990).

3.3.2.2 BEING OUR WORDS’ WORTH. Chikū’s remark, “When we help those who are in the mud, we cannot help that person unless we, too, get muddy” [3.3.2.1] is worth examining further. In this case, far from being limited by words, they actually serve to give us a clear hint of his mind. Psychologically, there is more to Chikū’s statement. We can deduce two useful imports from his figure. Firstly, that we need to really get down to the task and help others in every way. Or, secondly, that to help others we must become or at least appear to be like them.

Firstly, we could respond here by saying that getting “muddied” is not the same as being *able* to truly help another. We should be capable and compassionate helpers, at least, not worsening the situation. The Buddha’s teaching is essentially “against the current” (*paṭisota, gāmī*), against the flow of the world.⁸⁴ The Buddha, in his teaching, is *with* the world, but not *of* the world: only when we are out of the quicksand or quagmire, could we safely pull others out of it.⁸⁵ Furthermore, figurative speech, however, has its limits: its purpose ends, even worsens things, when it is misunderstood or can mislead us. There is a danger here we are nothing more than being adaptable chameleons, hollow Zelig-like characters.⁸⁶

Those familiar with **the Mahā, parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), however, will see what a remarkable parallel the Zelig story has with the Buddha’s declaration on how he fits in perfectly with the “eight assemblies,” that is, those of the nobles, the priests, the householders, the recluses, the Four Great Kings, the Thirty-two Gods, Mara’s host, and the host of the High God himself.

⁷⁷ Kuiji was a Chinese monk, an exponent of Yogācāra, and a prominent disciple of Xuanzang.

⁷⁸ Nichiren’s example was based on allegations made in the Tendai text, *Kindan Nichiren gi* (3:15r-1) by Shin’yō (d 1656). On the text, see Nichirenshū Jiten Kankō Iinkai (ed), *Nichirenshū Jiten*, 1981:66.

⁷⁹ *Nikujiki Saitai ben* 302b-303a. See Jaffe 2001:46.

⁸⁰ Jaffe 2001:47.

⁸¹ For Theravāda monastics, meat and fish are “pure” (ie, usable) if these 3 conditions are fulfilled: if one has not seen, heard or suspected that the being has been killed for one (V 3:171; VA 604); the allowable meat is known as “available meat” (*pavatta, maṃsa*, V 1:217, 3:172). In other words, one does not seek it, but it is offered to one. See **Veḷu, dvāreyya S** (S 55.7) @ SD 1.5 (3). On meat consumption in Indian Buddhism, see Shimoda 1989 & 1990.

⁸² Alt *Daijiki-kyō*, T13.1-409. *Nikujiki Saitai ben* 303b-304a.

⁸³ Cf “

⁸⁴ S 1:136 ; A 2:6, 214 f.

⁸⁵ Cf Dh 327; Sn 535, 845, 945, 1145..

⁸⁶ *Zelig* is a 1983 mockumentary about a man who finds security and approval from others by totally imitating them. See Piya Tan, “Being everything to everyone,” *Simple Joys* reflection 67, 2012, <http://dharmafarer.org>. On the allusion of “The Hollow Men” (1925), a poem by T S Eliot, which opens with the stanza, “We are the hollow men | We are the stuffed men | Leaning together | Headpiece filled with straw. Alas! | Our dried voices, | We whisper together | Are quiet and meaningless as wing in dry grass | Or rats’ feet over broken glass | In our dry cellar.”: <http://mural.uv.es/rubafa/hollowmen.htm>

“Ānanda, I recall having approached such an assembly of many hundreds, assembled with them before, and conversed with them before, and engaged in discussion with them before. Whatever their complexion was then, so was my complexion, too. Whatever was their voice then, so was my voice, too. I instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk.”⁸⁷

Is the Buddha here being a Zelig personality? Appearances (and words), of course, can deceive, but here the Buddha’s actions and their effects are just *the opposite* of what Zelig does. The Buddha is clearly not a hollow attention-starved personality. Indeed, he is *the* awakened one, well known for his love of peace and solitude. The Buddha is a supremely compassionate and effective teacher. Indeed, while Zelig tries to reach *up and out* to what he sees as the desirable qualities of the greatest egos near him, the Buddha skillfully reaches *down and into* those who will benefit from his wisdom.

The lesson here is clear. We can never be truly happy, not to say normal, by merely trying to collect and clothe ourselves with what we see as success or happiness. Simply put, we are then simply not ourselves. We may have a social, professional or public personality, but this can never be permanent. We must fill ourselves fully with happiness and goodness: this is what we truly are, or, at least, what we really would like to be.

Often enough, our external lives distract us so that we completely forget to fill ourselves up internally. Instead of looking outwards, we need to look within. We need to look deep enough and carefully study what wholesome qualities we really have, especially qualities that are of mutual benefit to others and to ourselves. We need to do this before the walls of success we have built around us collapse, or the floods of reality overwhelm us. It might just be too late then.

The best way to fill our inner true selves, to live fulfilling lives, is to feel inner peace and enjoy inner beauty. We need to get to know ourselves really better. If not, we will Zelig-like keep looking for approval from others and patterns to mimic. The reality is that we are painfully hollow, helplessly trying to echo and enchant others.

Ultimately, this never satisfies us because this is not our true self. We need the courage to be, to be true to ourselves. Only then we can be true to others. In the Buddha’s teachings, we have thus become true individuals.

3.3.4 Temple wives and children. One of Chikū’s arguments appears almost convincing because of its realism. In one of his longest defences, he pointed out that relationship between the Shin cleric and his wife, the *bōmori*, differed from that of the clerics of other schools: the Shin conjugal relationship was an open one. Chikū accused other clerics of furtive liaisons and casual sexual relations. “In our school,” he wrote, “one has one wife (*tsuma*), and she is made the *bōmori* [temple wife].”⁸⁸

The Shin temple wives were clearly more fortunate than the unofficial wives and families of non-Shin clerics. Since the Shin clerics openly married, their wives were a regular part of their wider community. Since they were generally wealthy and well organized, their wives and families as such enjoyed a good life, as far as their wealth and culture provided.

However, as we shall see, one of the pointed arguments against the married Shin clerics was that by marrying, eating meat and having their way, they had simply transgressed the monastic rules sanctioned by the Buddha. As such, they were clearly not monastics, and should not be using temple funds to support their wives and families. However, in a culture where status counted significantly, working as lay Buddhist workers was apparently never considered an option. [3.9]

3.4 CHANGE IN THE MONASTIC SOCIAL STATUS

3.4.1 Persecution of Buddhists. At the start of chapter 4, “The Household Registration System and the Buddhist Clergy,” Jaffe notes that during the Bakumatsu era⁸⁹—the last decades of the Tokugawa

⁸⁷ D 16.3.21-23/2:109 f = SD 9.

⁸⁸ *Nikujiki Saitai ben* 308.

⁸⁹ Bakumatsu 幕末 (lit “end of the curtain”), the late Tokugawa shogunate, ie the tumultous final years of the Edo period, when the shogunate came to an end. Specifically, this was 1853-1867, whose major event led to the ending of Japan’s isolationist foreign policy (*sakoku*) and transiting from a feudal class system to the Meiji imperial market-economy government. During the late Edo period, Japan felt the crippling impact of the western powers on its econ-

period—we see the most violent attacks on Buddhist institutions in Japan. The Shinto clergy, the Confucianists, the Nativists,⁹⁰ and the political economists attacked the Buddhists on various issues. In domains⁹¹ like Mitō and Satsuma, where anti-Buddhist sentiments were strongest, the daimyo tried to limit entrance into the Buddhist clergy, closed temples that were abandoned or without a resident cleric, banned funeral rites, and disrobed clerics, especially those charged with “offences.”

After the collapse of the Tokugawa and the rise of the Meiji state, the anti-Buddhist attacks became nationwide and national policy. Since the Buddhist institutions had been supported by the Tokugawa elite, the Meiji authorities distanced themselves from the Buddhists to win the support of the Shintos, the Nativists and those who would support their new ideology of modernization. A series of government edicts calling for the separation of the kami and the Buddhas (*shinbutsu bunri rei*) exploded into anti-Buddhist violence of *haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈 “abolish the buddhas, destroy Shakyamuni!” The motivating delusion here was that Buddhism was a “foreign” element to be rid off.⁹²

Government officials stood idly by as temples were looted and destroyed. **Tamamuro Fumio** estimates that of the approximate 200,000 Edo-period temples, only 74,600 were left after the early Meiji years (1868-1874) (1997:504 f). This public anger was mainly an outburst reacting against the centuries of Buddhist temple benefits from the *danka* system and patronage of the Tokugawa. Only in 1871, after armed uprisings by Jōdo Shin partisans and the failure of the Shintō clergy to conduct a proselytization campaign on their own, did the government end the physical violence on Buddhist clerics and temples, by which time the destruction was already massive and irreversible.⁹³

3.4.2 Separation of “state and church.” After the 1630s, the Tokugawa authorities, in their efforts to remove any Christian or European influence, formed a religious inquisition (*shūmon aratame*) and used the nationwide Buddhist temple network of the *danka* and the *terauke* systems as their public policing system [2.1.6]. During the Edo period, it was the authorities who policed the clerics and weeded out any Christian infiltration. The situation radically changed under the Meiji: the Buddhist institutions themselves had to deal with their own religious affairs. This was part of sweeping changes initiated by the Meiji government at modernizing Japan to prevent the encroachment of the western powers [2.1.5; 2.2].

All this brought unprecedented change upon the Buddhist clerics. Jaffe, in his book, *Neither Monk Nor Layman*, examines the different ways in which the shift from the Edo-period temple household registration to a civil household registration system brought about wide-ranging impact on religious life, especially the Buddhist clerical status. According to Jaffe, the transformation of the social status of the Buddhist clergy by way of the abolition of the social ranking system in the Edo period arose from a new concept of “religion” (*shūkyō* 宗教), which was basically a westernized notion of *the separation of state and religion*. This policy led to a reform in the social roles of the Buddhist clergy.

The authorities now did not recognize the ordination ceremony as it did in the Edo period.⁹⁴ The clerics (who previously renounced their lay-names and adopted new ordination names) were now re-

omy (in 1860, she lost some 4M ryō, about 70 tons, of gold to foreigners, resulting in its monetary breaking down), politics (in 1863, the *mikado*, emperor Kōmei, took the unprecedented step in issuing “an order to expel barbarians”), and even health (cholera brought in by foreigners killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese). Besides, major famines increased food prices drastically.

⁹⁰ “Nativism” (國學 *kokugaku*, lit “the study of one’s nation” or “national learning”) refers to an intellectual movement that emerged in late 18th century Japan in explicit opposition to *Kangaku* or “Chinese Studies,” the study of Confucian works, in favour of Japanese culture and literature: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kokugaku-school/>

⁹¹ A “domain” 藩 *han* referred to the estate of a warrior (after 12th cent), or the fief of a daimyo [2.1.5.2], who was then called *han chiji* (Edo period, 1603-1868). After 1871, during the Meiji period, they were reorganized into prefectures (*ken*) See *Japan Encyclopedia*, 2005:282, sv *han*.

⁹² On persecutions of Buddhists in pre-modern China, see **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b.7 (7.4.1).

⁹³ For details, see Ketelaar 1990:3-86. Briefer studies, see Grapard 1984:240-265; Collcutt 1986:143-167; Thelle 1987; Hardacre 1989:27-31, 42-59; Davis 1989:304-339. Two important trs from Jap on Meiji Buddhism are Kishimoto 1956 and Murakami 1980. See also Jaffe 2001:58 f.

⁹⁴ Jaffe 2001:78-87.

quired to adopt surnames.⁹⁵ They no more enjoyed special class privileges, but were simply ordinary citizens. The effects however were more far-reaching, as they transformed the lives and conduct of the clerics. Not only were lineage and temple relationships altered, but also basic questions, such as who owned the temple property, came to light.

All this was part of the authorities' efforts to abandon the feudal class system of the Tokugawa, so that all citizens were equal before the law. This was known as the Jinshin Koseki system, instituted in 1872, serving as the new household registry.⁹⁶ Such a move not only centralizes power in the capital, but also gave the government a more effective social control over the citizens.

3.4.3 The *nikujiki saitai* law. The key legislation the Meiji government, one of its earliest (31 May 1872), made to further effect the separation of state and church as regards the Buddhist clerics, was the *nikujiki saitai* ("meat-eating and marriage") law. Interesting, it is not a prohibition, but actually a decriminalization statement. The law simply stated: "From now on, Buddhist clerics shall be free to eat meat, marry, grow their hair, and so on. Furthermore, they are permitted to wear ordinary clothing when not engaged in religious activities."⁹⁷

自今僧侶肉食妻帯蓄髮等可爲勝手事 但法用ノ外ハ人民一般の服ヲ着用不苦候事
Ima yori sōryo nikujiki saitai chikuhatsu nado katte tarubeki koto. Tadashi hōyō no hoka wa jin-
min ippan no fuku o chakuyō kurishikarazaru sōrō koto. (Jaffe 2001:72; Covell 2005:75)

As **Ketelaar** has noted, this law, "in spite of its seemingly innocuous phraseology, in fact disguises a radical change in the conception of the relation between public, Imperial law (*Ōbo*) and the Buddha's Law (*Buppō*) as contained within the priests' religious vows." (1990:5 f). In hindsight, we could say that Meiji legislators were astute in not legislating a direct sanction or prohibition on the Buddha (this might have led to a Buddhist revolt). The looseness of this legislation, yet touching on the key pillars of Buddhist clericalism, was a proverbial monkey wrench thrown into the Buddhist clerical machinery to effectively disable it, or at least put it in the right place in the national ideology. On 22 January 1873, the legislation was extended to the nuns without any fanfare. Historically, these legislations mark the end of state enforcement of clerical law and marks the increasing privatization of the religious sector in Japan.

3.4.4 Preventing Christian influences

3.4.4.1 TEMPLE REGISTRY. Right to the end of western colonial times, European power was invariably Christian power. While the presence of the foreign powers asserted political control over country they had conquered, they attempt to win over the native minds (or "souls" as some might say) through a deep study of local ways: this grew into the academic discipline of anthropology.⁹⁸ The sagacious Japanese rulers, even during the Edo period had noticed how treacherous and avaricious the western religious powers were, slowly working to swallow up the whole nation for a foreign God [2.1.5.2].

While the Tokugawa authorities made use of the vast Buddhist network of temples as a registry to weed out Christian infiltrators, during the Meiji period, when Japan was threatened by another, even greater force—modernization—the authorities had to think of different ways of responding to these challenges. We will focus here only on the role and fate of the Japanese Buddhists. Firstly, the authorities, by secularizing the Buddhist clergy [3.4.2], ensured that they did not in any way threaten the country's peace and stability.

Sakamoto Koremaru has written on the Meiji government's dilemma in the early 1870's. It had to stem spread of Christianity internally, and yet convince the western powers [2.2] that there was some

⁹⁵ Jaffe 2001:73-78.

⁹⁶ Jaffe 2001:64-70.

⁹⁷ Date 1981:621.

⁹⁸ The term "anthropology" first appeared in English, prob in 1593, in referemce to a natural science of humanity, the first of the "logies" to be coined ([Urbanowicz 1992](#)). Institutionally, anthropology emerged from the development of natural history (expounded by writers such as the French naturalist Comte de Buffon, 1707-1788) in the background of European colonization from the 17th to the 20th centuries. Systematic ethnographic studies of "human primitives" were used in these times, supervised by colonial authorities for more effective control of natives.

degree of religious freedom for all Japanese, including the Christians (1983:50 f). In other words, the Meiji government knew that it was a matter of time when Japan would have to accept foreigners if she were to prosper and grow with the rest of the world. This meant that Christianity would have to be allowed freely grow in the country.

In 1867, when religious trouble with the Urakami Christians flared up again,⁹⁹ radical patriots such as Kido Takayoshi (1833-1877) were convinced that only a national teaching, including Buddhism, could slow down the spread of Christianity and prevent civil disorder.¹⁰⁰ When after an period, the Shintoists miserably failed as proselytizers, the authorities turned to the Buddhists, being natural preachers, to play their role as propagators and preservers of not only Buddhism, but of all Japanese culture, to counter Christian influence.¹⁰¹ [2.1.6]

3.4.4.2 INSTRUCTING THE PEOPLE. In 1872, the Ministry of Doctrine was created, and it launched the Doctrinal Instructor system. Also created was the Ministry of Rites (*Shikiburyō*), in charge of all state rites, which further ensured the separation of state and church. The national teachers, working through the Ministry of Doctrine, were to disseminate the Three Standards of Instructions (*Sanjō no Kyōsoku*), that is,

- (1) comply with the commands to revere the kami and love the nation;
- (2) illuminate the principle of heaven and the way of man;
- (3) serve the emperor and faithfully maintain the will of the court. (Ketelaar 1990:106)

While the other religions or systems—Shintoism (*shin-kyō*), Confucianism, Buddhism, and even Christianity in due course—were *private* concerns, these three Standards would become the bases for a new civil religion or national ideology, which would later (1970) be formalized as State Shintō 国家神道 *Kokka Shintō*, while the traditional form is then known as Sect Shintō.¹⁰² Although the Doctrinal Instructor system was abolished in 1884, while it existed, the Buddhists were seen as being a part of the national culture, and contributive to it.

3.5 MEIJI MODERNIZATION POLICY AND BUDDHISM

3.5.1 New religious policies. Chapter 5 focuses on the activities of Buddhist clergy in accommodating to the Meiji government's efforts to modernize the state and resisting the spread of Christianity, and attempting to preserve or revive their clerical status. This chapter describes how their work enormously contributed to the creation of new religious policies. Jaffe describes how the Buddhist clergy participated in the creation of those laws that affected them the most, appealing, negotiating and making compromises.

3.5.2 Ōtori Sessō. Jaffe, in his researches, discovered that there was at least one Buddhist who could have prevented the legislation of the *nikujiki saitai* but promoted it instead. He was a relatively obscure Sōtō cleric, Ōtori Sessō (1814-1904), neither a brilliant intellectual nor an astute advocate of Buddhism. His position was however enhanced when he was asked to join the Sain 左院 (Chamber of the Left), a new government institution involved in the drafting of laws.¹⁰³ For this, he was instructed to return to lay life,

⁹⁹ There were three crackdowns on the Kirishitans (Japanese Catholics) of Urakami village, north of Nagasaki, for illicit religious activities: two under the Tokugawa, and the third in 1867. The last and most severe crackdown resulted from their rebaptism, which meant renouncing their temple household registrations [3.4]. In February 1868, the new Meiji government appointed Sawa Nobuyoshi, a well-known xenophobe, in charge of public order in Kyūshū. After some consultation, he decided to make a final end to the problem. His plan to exile the entire village of 3,414 was approved by an Imperial council. First, the ringleaders were exiled to Hagi, Tsuwano and Fukuyama; and then the families were split up and exiled to all over Japan. Some 680 died in internment. In 1873, when religious freedom was granted in Japan, the survivors were allowed to return to Urakami. Ironically, Urakami was the ground zero of the atomic bomb dropped by the US on 9 Aug 1945, exploding 500 m (1640 ft) from the cathedral, completely destroying it. See Burkman 1974 & http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urakami_Yoban_Kuzure.

¹⁰⁰ Jaffe 2001:102 (where he gives the year as 1868).

¹⁰¹ Jaffe 2001:68 f.

¹⁰² See Fridell 1976.

¹⁰³ In 1875, the Sain was replaced by the Chamber of Elders 元老院 *Genrōin*, a national assembly whose members (theoretically appointed directly by the Emperor) were drawn from the peerage, upper ranks of the bureaucracy, and various scholars. In 1876, it was tasked with drafting the Constitution, but this was rejected as being too liberal. In 1889, the Gerōin was replaced by the Imperial Diet 帝國議會 *Teikoku-gikai* by way of adopting the Meiji Constitu-

which he did. Due to his position within the Meiji government, he became one of the most influential Buddhists of his time, serving as a commissioner, as an expert on Buddhist affairs, in the Ministry of Doctrine.

Jaffe's study of Ōtori shows how Buddhist, Shinto and state interests, though at times had differing concerns, were necessarily aligned in the early Meiji period against the intrusion of Christianity and for the building of a national identity. Such common concerns led Buddhists to actively seek a role in the state's national Doctrine Instructor system [3.4.4]. Clerics such as Ōtori saw a need to do away with outdated customs, such as the ban on clerical marriage, in order to better serve the state as doctrinal instructors. He made three concrete suggestions for reforming the Buddhist clergy here summarized):

- (1) The Buddhist should re-examine their lofty goals and teachings for more practical and worldly ones.
- (2) Clerics should be sent to the west "so that they will be enlightened and know themselves and others."
- (3) The clerics should stop all corrupt practices, learn about worldly affairs, begin sectarian study in due course and teach harmony amongst the people.¹⁰⁴

If any single person were to be instrumental in the legislation of the *nikujiki saitai* law, it would be Ōtori. His rationale was that the decriminalization of meat-eating and clerical marriage would help systematize all religious organizations and modernize Japan.¹⁰⁵ Like the public Buddhist figures of our times who, lack scriptural and spiritual depth, allowed themselves to be persuaded that monastics should "modernize" themselves to keep up with the times Ōtori, too, felt he should, as it were, put the country before his faith. Understandably, the majority of concerned Buddhist leaders were up in arms against him for selling out the Buddhist cause.¹⁰⁶

3.5.3 Ugawa Shōchō. Ōtori was of course not alone in viewing that modernization of Buddhism would benefit itself, and that this modernization necessitated that such rules and traditions as monastic celibacy and mode of dress were "outmoded," and had to be done away with. At least one other prominent Buddhist cleric outside the government, that is, the Tendai cleric **Ugawa Shōchō** (宇川照澄), who shared his views and submitted them to the government seven months after the *nikujiki saitai* law was introduced, that is, in December 1872.

Ugawa's petition was more lengthy and thorough. He called for the mandatory marriage of the clerics, disrobing of unfit clerics (they becoming more productive, for example, as farmers), limiting the number of temples, abolishing the various Buddhist denominations, and unifying their doctrines, rules, liturgy and dress. His arguments were based on the notion that it was the "Last Age of the Teaching" (the Dharma-ending Age), so that people were unable to uphold the precepts.¹⁰⁷

3.6 ATTACKS ON NIKUJIKI SAITAI

3.6.1 Government-Buddhist dialogues. In chapter 6, Jaffe examines the confrontation between Buddhist denominational leaders who tried to revive the Buddhist precepts, and others—such as governmental leaders—who argued that religious matters should be an individual issue and that the state should have no hand in it. Active Buddhist-state cooperation (already mentioned in chapter 5) is examined in some depths, especially the strong Buddhist resistance to the decriminalization of clerical marriage.

The underlying question of whether the traditional precepts were still relevant or could be adhered to at all in the modern age, an issue raised in other chapters, is examined in detail in the world Fukuda Gyo-kai [3.6.2] and the precept revival movement. Jaffe's examination of the modern precept revival movement in Japan is invaluable because despite their central role within Buddhist practice, there is little work

tion 明治憲法 *Meiji Kenpō* was the organic law of the Japanese empire, in force from 29 Nov 1890 until 2 May 1947, when it became the National Diet 国会 *Kokkai*, by virtue of the post-war constitution.

¹⁰⁴ Yasumaru & Miyachi 1988:30.

¹⁰⁵ Jaffe 2001:109

¹⁰⁶ Jaffe 2001:114.

¹⁰⁷ Jaffe 2001:109-112.

done in English by the specialists. His treatment of the precepts helps to bring classical Buddhology into the modern world.

3.6.2 Fukuda Gyokai (1809-1888), from the Jōdo Shin school, was one of the most important leaders in efforts to repeal the *nikujiki saitai* law. Early in 1872, he was abbot of the Ekōin temple, and also an influential member of the pan-sectarian organization, the Shoshū Dōtoku Kaimei, formed in 1869, to repeal the new law. It included those from the Jōdo (an abbot), the Sōtō (an abbot), the Rinzai, the Nichiren (a chief priest), the Shingon, and the Tendai (a chief priest). Fukuda was also the head of the Great Teaching Academy.¹⁰⁸

While Fukuda agreed with the proponents of the decriminalizing clerical marriage argued that Buddhism's problems were its own, brought on by corruption, he rejected the notion of the clergy changing with the times. Instead, he argued for stricter adherence to the precepts, and that the government must continue its role in helping to enforce moral discipline amongst the clergy, and that the *nikujiki saitai* law was a hindrance to Buddhist reformation.¹⁰⁹

Fukuda was deeply influenced by the ten good precepts (*jūzenkai*)¹¹⁰ of **Onkō Jiun** (1718-1804) and promoted them. However, he was also aware that they were lay precepts which merely prohibited illicit sex. He also promoted the 10 precepts for novices and the 10 precepts for Mahayana Bodhisattvas (*shiguseigan*).¹¹¹ In the case the latter two sets of precepts, any kind of sexual act is prohibited. The precepts are taken upon oneself voluntarily, but once taken up, they should be properly kept, as in the latter two cases.

Fukuda's petition to the Ministry of Doctrines, signed by "the chief priests of all the schools," was one of the most important defences of the Buddhist ban against meat-eating, clerical marriage, and the wearing of civvies by clerics. After noting the confusion amongst the clergy, he asked the officials to note these seven problems with the new law lifting the ban against meat-eating and clerical marriage (summarized):

- (1) This would signal a complete relaxation of the precepts, leading weak human astray, and hindering the work of Buddhism.
- (2) It is confusing and troubling when there is no distinguishing between the monastic and the lay.
- (3) It would be confusing for the meat-eating married clerics to live and work alongside the precept-keeping monastics in the same temple.
- (4) Temple parishioners do not wish to support meat-eating married clerics.
- (5) There would be confusion between the pure and the impure, leading to negative effects on the teaching of Buddhism.
- (6) It would be almost impossible for Buddhist leaders to control younger clerics, especially those inclined to sexual transgressions.
- (7) The Sutras teach that sexual desire and meat-eating are found only in the sense-world, but not in the other two worlds (the form and formless worlds), and Buddhism is based on the precepts restricting meat-eating and sexuality.¹¹²

Fukuda was adamant in his stand, stating that there was no alternative life-style for an ordained monk. Using clear strong language he declared that one would be *baka* ("stupid") not to be able to distinguish a horse from a deer, pointedly rejecting the view of such people as Ōtori [3.5.2] and Ugawa [3.5.3] who

¹⁰⁸ Jaffe 2001:115.

¹⁰⁹ Davis 1989:312 f; Jaffe 2001:116-119.

¹¹⁰ These are actually the 10 unwholesome courses of action (*dasa akusala kamma, patha*), which are to be avoided: see **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41.8-10/1:286 f) & SD 5.7 (2). The usual lay precepts of early Buddhism are the 5 precepts (*pañca, sīla*): see **Sīlānussati** = SD 15.11.

¹¹¹ See Mochizuki 1942:336-339; for details of Fukuda's view of the precepts, see Jaffe 1995:136-140. See also Covell 2005:74.

¹¹² *Kyōbushō e kengen*, Mochizuki 1942:451-453 (summarized). See Jaffe 2001:124 f (paraphrased).

argued that clerical conduct were mere trifles. He regarded those meat-eating married clerics living in temples merely as thieves.¹¹³

While the myth of the “Last Days of the Teaching” (*mappo*) or Dharma-ending Age was often used by past teachers and leaders as the excuse for the troubles facing Buddhism and for initiating changes, Fukuda flatly rejected this notion, declaring that in human terms, the Buddha’s times and our own were no different. Human capacity or lack of it was the same, but if such laws as the *nikujiki saitai* were in force, then they would become stumbling blocks.¹¹⁴

3.6.3 Nishiari Bokusan, a member of the Sōtō school, in his letter to the Sōtō clergy in Miyagi prefecture, where he lived, echoed the same sentiment, that the current decline was due to humans themselves. The clerical weakness was due to social problems of the Meiji era. In his tract, “Refutation of Clerical Marriage,” Nishiari directly addressed a few Confucianist criticisms of Buddhism, such as that Buddhist renunciation, giving up the family and not producing heirs was unfilial.

Nishiari, in his defence of Buddhism, drew from a rich mine of apologetic literature against Confucianism. For example, he echoed the Chinese literatus Sun Chuo 孙绰 (c300-380) who asserted that Confucian ethics was incomplete due to the contradiction of two of its salient virtues: filial piety and loyalty.¹¹⁵ Sun stressed that Buddhist monastics make the ultimate repayment of their debts to the family by converting their parents to Buddhism, thus assuring their salvation.¹¹⁶

Nishiari as such was more critical of the deteriorating social conditions in Japan of his times, rather than finding fault with the Buddhist situation, which after all was part of Japanese society. He attributed the various problems confronting Japan—ranging from disloyalty to social dislocation—to the overwhelming emphasis on material progress and modernization at the expense of spiritual growth.¹¹⁷

3.6.4 Shaku Unshō. Almost a year after Fukuda had submitted his petition, **Shaku Unshō** 釋雲照 (1827-1909) appealed to the Sain to repeal the *nikujiki saitai* law. Unlike Fukuda, however, Unshō’s two petitions (submitted on 2 and 12 November 1873) drew immediate response, and he was summoned to meet a committee of the Sain’s Criminal Law Department.

Like Fukuda, Unshō was a central figure in the precept restoration movement, who hope to revive Buddhism through the practice of the “ten good precepts” and the three trainings, based mostly on the writings of Jiun¹¹⁸ [3.6.2]. Unlike the majority of his contemporary clerics, Unshō strictly kept to the 250 precepts¹¹⁹ of traditional Buddhism, and was reputed to have refrained from taking life, drinking liquor, carrying money, eating after noon, or even pouring hot water on the ground lest some creatures were killed as a result.¹²⁰

Ironically, Unshō’s strict precept-keeping ways alienated him from many of the other members of the Buddhist reform movement, who viewed his traditionalism as being world-negating. His own Shingon colleagues, apprehensive at his vigour and forthrightness in confronting the Meiji government to lift the ban on women at Mt Kōya, had the temple officials remove him from there, claiming that such a “mad-man” would endanger the welfare of the school by challenging the authorities!¹²¹

¹¹³ Jaffe 2001:127. On Fukuda’s allusion to such clerics as “thieves,” cf Comys say that a false monk eats the country’s alms a thief, a good monk who eats without reflecting is a debtor, a saint on the path talks his almsfood as an heir, while an arhat is an owner of the almsfood (MA 5:32; SA 2:199).

¹¹⁴ *Sessō tōmon*, Mochizuki 1942:165. Ikeda 1976a:89. See Jaffe 2001:130.

¹¹⁵ For an excellent discussion on this conflict in Japanese Confucianism, see McMullen 1987:56-97.

¹¹⁶ E Zurcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*. 2 vols. Leiden: E J Brill, 1959:284. 3rd ed 2007:284.

¹¹⁷ Jaffe 2001:138 f.

¹¹⁸ Kusanagi 1913:23-27; Ikeda 1976a:52-68, 1976b:58-80; Jaffe 2001:140-147.

¹¹⁹ The Theravāda Pāṭimokkha today has 227 rules, but the suttas generally refer to them as the “150 rules” (*sādhikāṃ...diyāḍḍha, sikkhāpada, sataṃ*, A 1:230-234; cf M Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature* 2, 2nd ed, 1972: 23 & n5). See also Piyasilo, *Buddhist Law*, Malaysia, 1988b:51.

¹²⁰ Tsunemitsu 1968 1:89-91.

¹²¹ Tsunemitsu 1968 1:84. The ban on women (*nyonin kinsei*) was lifted on 4 May 1872, about a month before the decriminalization of *nikujiki saitai*. For this edict relating to shrines and temples, see Date 1981:620.

Unshō was, as such, renowned for his strict adherence to the Vinaya, behavior that was rare in the Meiji era. In 1886, learning of the degeneration of Buddhist sites in India, the 59-year-old Unshō sent his student Shaku Kōzen to check things out, and also requested that Kōzen studied the Buddhist precepts as practised in Sri Lanka and the Buddhist customs of the region.¹²² Kōzen remained in south Asia for seven years before returning to Japan in 1893.¹²²

Unshō's argument was simply that a pure monastic order was only possible when the temple heads' efforts were supported and reinforced by the government. On the other hand, such laws as those that decriminalized meat-eating and clerical marriage would only encourage moral transgression. The temple leaders by themselves would be not effective in reforming, much less controlling, those who lacked discipline. However, when both the temple leaders and the government authorities work together, order and purity of the clerics would be assured and the national would benefit.

All this also meant that if a cleric broke any of the “defeat” (*pārājika*) rules—sexual intercourse, stealing, murder or encouraging death, and false claim to superhuman power¹²³—they should be expelled from the order, as if they have been “decapitated” (*danzuzai*), alluding to the term *sīsa-c, chinna*.¹²⁴ In fact, they should be subject to the same punishment as the laity who commit adultery or incest.¹²⁵ As such, Unshō was uncompromising where the purity of the clerics was concerned. Unfortunately, his was a rare voice in the wilderness.

3.6.5 Corrupted clerics who wait for death. In the closing years of the last century and millennium, the mass media often reported on the shadow of Japanese Buddhism with such headlines as these: “Buddhist priest nabbed for bag-snatching,”¹²⁶ “Priest arrested for sniffing thinner,”¹²⁷ or “Priest conducts funeral for own traffic victim” (in which a priest ran over a parish member, failed to stop, and later performed her funeral).¹²⁸ One of the hottest, even darkest, issues of the Japanese Buddhist clerics was their commercialization of the funeral ritual (not different from what is going on with the Chinese priests in Singapore and Malaysia).

The extremely high costs of a Buddhist funeral in Japan are proverbial and widely criticized. A survey organised by the Japan Consumers Association (日本消費者協会 *Nihon shōhisha kyōkai*) in 1995 gave shocking figures. An average of 2.71M yen (roughly GBP14,000) was spent on each funeral. This survey showed that out of the average total, some 870,000 yen (roughly GBP4,500) went to the temple, 1.39M yen went to the funeral company, and the remaining 450,000 yen (roughly GBP2,400) was used on other expenses, such as food, drink and gifts to the guests (Himon'ya 1995). This suggests that the high costs of the funeral were significantly inflated by the demands of Buddhist priests. The Japanese public generally felt that priests were simply profiteering from the funeral business. Understandably, priestly luxurious lifestyle in their affluent temples was often criticised (Tamura 1992). Such widespread disapproval is reflected in the popular Japanese saying, “a priest making a clean profit” (坊主丸儲け *bozu marumōke*). (Mitsutoshi 2006).

This is an old problem. Earlier on, **Fukuda** himself complained that undertaking had become a cleric's primary means of support, as if it was their fixed occupation. “Ultimately, as clerics we have forgotten to wait for their own deaths and instead wait for the deaths of our parishioners. we have forgotten to cultivate good ourselves; instead we work for the good of the deceased.”¹²⁹

3.7 ACCEPTING MODERNIZATION

3.7.1 A “two-tiered” approach. In chapter 7 of his book, *Neither Monk Nor Layman*, Jaffe continues discussing the sectarian leaders' opposition to the dissemination of the *nikujiki saitai* decriminalization

¹²² See Jaffe 2004.

¹²³ Pār 1 = V 3:23,23-36, Pār 2 = V 3:46,16-20, Pār 3 = V 3:73,10-16, Pār 4 = V 3:91,19-25.

¹²⁴ *Pārājika* means “just as a man who is beheaded is unable of living in connection with that body” (*pārājiko hoti ti seyyathā'pi nāma puriso sīsa-c, chinno abhabbo tena sarīra.bandhanena jīvitum*, V 3:28,16).

¹²⁵ Shaku Unshō 1873b:946. See Jaffe 2001:142 f.

¹²⁶ *Mainichi Daily News*, 19 Sep 1999. Online ed “Top News” (<http://mdn.mainichi.co.jp>). Qu in Covell 2005:74.

¹²⁷ *Daily Yomiuri*, 4 Feb 1994:2. Qu in Covell 2005:74.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 16 Apr 1995:2. Qu in Covell 2005:74.

¹²⁹ *Sessō tōmon*, Mochizuki 1942:181. See Jaffe 2001:122.

law. Shortly after *nikujiki saitai* were decriminalized (1872), Rinzai Zen leaders issued a joint directive to their clergy stating that clerics who indulged in sex would be expelled. The leaders of both the Jōdo (1872, 1874) and the Nichiren (1875) denominations, too, warned their clerics to keep to the precepts.¹³⁰

While stringent measures were officially made by the various denominational leaders, almost all of them knew that full enforcement of such standards was impossible in the wake of the decriminalization law. Even as early as 1873, some denominational leaders advised turning a blind eye towards clerics who, in accordance with local customs, chose to marry. The abbots of the main Sōtō temples, the Eihei-ji 永平寺 and the Sōji-ji 總持寺, further warned that the debate over the *nikujiki saitai* decriminalization would be heated, and that local temples should not be too rigid in their enforcement sectarian discipline.¹³¹

The leader of the Omuro-ha (Shingon branch) head temple, the Ninna-ji 仁和寺, in Kyoto, took the trouble to explain that despite the decriminalization of *nikujiki saitai*, precept violation was not the way for a true disciple of the Buddha, and that the law's purpose was to cause "the true relationship between sovereign and subjects, enlightened civilization, and true teachers of Buddhism to flourish." For this to happen, evils of the past must be abandoned. As such, those who wished to marry, take meat, grow their hair, or wear civvies, must first obtain permission from the head temple. In other words, the head temple would decide who could break the precepts, and to keep track of those who were "pure."¹³²

When the Kyoto prefectural government received a request from the Omuro-ha leader, they similarly replied that the *nikujiki saitai* did not mean that the Buddhist clergy *had* to take meat or marry, but that it was acceptable if they did. The sect leaders, as such, asserted that those who engaged in *nikujiki saitai* (marriage and meat-eating) should be treated as laymen (*ubasoku*), and only those who did not are the "true monks" (*shōsō*).¹³³ In due course, this "two-tiered" system was followed by the Tendai as well as the Sōtō.

3.7.2 The government restates its position. There were those who opposed such an arrangement, fearing that this would lead to internal segregation. Again, the various temples had to make renewed efforts to remind their clerics not to breach the precepts. On a positive note, the various efforts of the Buddhist leaders to pressure the government into repealing the *nikujiki saitai* law had some small effect. In 1878, the government announced a modification to the law, namely, "Edict 133, which states that the clergy are free to eat meat and marry, only serves to abolish the state law that had prohibited such activities. In no way does the law have anything to do with the sectarian regulations."¹³⁴

In fact, the government was saying nothing new and restating the obvious: that the government was washing its hands off religious affairs, and Buddhist clerical affairs were in the hands of the head clerics of the various denominations. The least that the various denomination leaders could do then was to each issue directives to their own clerics that they had to abide by sect laws. But the debate on clerical marriage and related matters continued.

In his book, Jaffe further explores how the Buddhist clerics who affirmed this law modernized Buddhism in terms of concepts such as science, individual rights, and nationalism. The government was adamant in its views towards the separation of state and religion, and the Buddhists quickly took advantage of this.

Jaffe closes by noting that even after government interference slowed down (such as on account of the failed Doctrinal Instructor system [3.4.4.2]), and the clerical leaders had a greater control of those under them, the general inclination was that precept adherence was a private matter. The clerics, in short, were divided on the course to be taken. Clearly, this must have been one of the aims of the *nikujiki saitai* laws and related legislations: to *divide and rule* the Buddhists.

3.8 RECONSTRUCTING BUDDHISMS

3.7.1 Tanaka Chigaku

¹³⁰ Sakurai 1954:261; Ōhashi 1987:80, 93; Nichirenshū rokuji 1898:2 f. Jaffe 2001:150.

¹³¹ Kumamoto 1996:18. Jaffe 2001:151.

¹³² Shūkyōshi 1964:182, "Myōdō-ken yori sōryo nikujiki saitai no gi ni tsuki ukagau." Jaffe 2001:151 f.

¹³³ id. Jaffe 2001:152.

¹³⁴ Fukuda, *Sōfū risei no kengen*, 1942:454; Date 1930b:720; Jaffe 2001:158.

3.7.1.1 FOUNDER OF NICHIRENISM. In chapter 8 of his book, Jaffe (2001) focussed on the position and fate of the conjugal family in Japan from the Meiji times onwards. Although most temple leaders rejected clerical marriage, many of them actively worked to reform Buddhism to place greater importance on the family. The most radical efforts in this direction was made by **Tanaka Chigaku** 田中智學 (1861-1939), a Nichiren preacher and nationalist, to reconstruct a modern lay Buddhism. Tanaka introduced new Buddhist rituals for marriage and the conjugal family (*katei*).

He was born as Tada Tomonosuke as the third son of a noted physician and Shin Buddhist who converted to Nichirenism. In 1870, following the death of his parents, Tanaka was placed under the care of Kawase Nichiren. Enrolled as a novice at Kawase's temple, he later joined the Nichiren Buddhist academy of Daikyo-in (the predecessor to Rishō University), during which time he adopted the sobriquet Chigaku 智學 ("Wisdom and Learning").

3.7.1.2 FOCUS ON THE FAMILY. At this time, too, Tanaka found the sect leadership too passive in their teachings, and in 1879, at 19, gave up the priesthood to preach the "true" Nichiren Buddhism. After briefly working for a German engineering company in Yokohama, he joined the lay Nichiren organization, the Nichiren-kai 日蓮会, as a preacher. Soon, he developed his own uncompromising Nichiren doctrine, which he called "Nichirenism" (日蓮主義 *Nichirensugui*) (1901), reformulating Buddhism as a domestic religion.

Although Tanaka Chigaku has been the subject of numerous works, Jaffe's study gives us fresh insight, especially into the question of clerical marriage and Japanese society. Jaffe offers a close reading of Tanaka's *Bukkyō fūfu ron* (仏教夫婦論 Treatise on Buddhist Married Life) to explain Tanaka's stance on the family, Buddhism, and the state. In closing, Jaffe states that Tanaka used the existence of clerical marriage and the family to argue that the only possible Buddhism was that of lay Buddhism.

As a typical Nichirenist iconoclast who rejected all other Buddhisms and religions, Tanaka projected the Kamakura monk, Nichiren [2.1.4.6], as a patriot. Tanaka introduced a nationalistic reading into Nichiren's vision, claiming that the underlying purpose of the Lotus Sutra and Nichiren's teaching was that of the Japanese national essence.¹³⁵ Tanaka was a skilled orator and spin master who placed Japanese nationalism above even Buddhism itself.¹³⁶

3.7.1.3 THE SPIN MASTER. Nichiren, in his key work, *Rissho ankoku ron* (立正安国論 "Treatise on Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land," 1258), basically viewed that all beings, including the emperor as being equally subject to the ultimate truth of his Lotus Sutra Buddhism. However, Tanaka, in his *Bukkyō fūfu ron* and numerous works,¹³⁷ "tore the quotation [from Nichiren] out of context in order to ground his ultra-nationalist interpretation of Buddhism in Nichiren's writings and to give primacy to the emperor and nation rather than to the Dharma."¹³⁸

Tanaka pointed in fingers to the causes for Japan's problems. While many other proponents of the western idea of the family partly blamed outmoded and unhealthy Asian and Confucian traditions for the family and social problems rampant in Japan then, Tanaka viewed Chinese culture as *the* cause for the denigration of women.¹³⁹ For example, a common mediaeval Japanese saying goes: "Women are hell's messengers; they can cut off forever the buddha-seed. On the outside they are like bodhisattvas, but on the in their hearts, they are like yakshas."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Jacqueline Stone (1994) has shown that the image of Nichiren as a diehard patriot was largely an invention of the Meiji and Taishō periods.

¹³⁶ Satō 1999:311.

¹³⁷ Lee says that this was Tanaka's watershed work (1975:24-26).

¹³⁸ Jaffe 2001:175 quoting Sato 1999:321 f.

¹³⁹ Tanaka especially blamed the Confucian notion of the "three obediences" (*sanjū*; Chin *sancong* 三從) of women, ie, obeying her father before marriage, her husband during marriage, and her son after her husband's death (禮記 *Li ji*, "Book of Rites"). Further see Muta 1994:58 f.

¹⁴⁰ 女人地獄使, 能斷佛種子; 外面似菩薩, 內心如夜叉: Koizumi 1993:212. Taira no Yasuyori 平康頼 (fl 1190-1200) attr the passage to Nirvāṇa Sūtra (Jap: Nehan-kyō 涅槃經), Nichiren (1221-1282) to Avatamsaka S (Jap: Kegon-kyō 華嚴經), and Zonkaku 存覚 (1290-1373) to Vimśatikā, vijñapti, mātrata, siddhi Śāstra (Jap: Yuishiki-ron 成唯識論), all of which are Mahāyāna works. However, it is *not* found in any Buddhist text, although it was a common saying

Tanaka also blamed Hīnayāna, which he derisively called “Indian bumpkin Buddhism” (山ダシ仏教 *yamadashi Bukkyō*), for whatever role it had, in his view, in preventing Japan from progressing.¹⁴¹ Yet, despite his reconstructing Buddhism for his family-centred ideology, on the calligraphic frontispiece of his book, *Bukkyō fūfu ron* (1994), Tanaka wrote *Hotoke wa shibito ni arasu*, “Buddha is not a dead person!”¹⁴² Surely, he must, consciously or unconsciously, be speaking of himself.

3.7.2 Lessons to be learnt. The ingredients for a new religion (新宗教 *shinshūkyō*) are as follows: some level of narcissism in us (also known as charisma), a radical idea that people can relate to (giving an easy answer for a complex problem), attracting and using sufficient resources and funds for our purposes, and a community of people rooted in a herd instinct and profound respect for authority. All these are found in Tanaka Chigaku.

We see similar developments with Chan Buddhism in China during the Sōng dynasty, although the social climate was somewhat different. From the clever and desperate religious gerrymanderings of those like Shenhui and Dahui Zonggao, Chan Buddhism was reconstructed to be a magnet to attract the literati (the affluent learned class) of urban China. Buddhism was merely a tool for personal success and glory of these Chan masters.

The southern priest **Hézé Shénhuì** 荷澤神會 (688-762), jealous of the success of the northern priest Shénxiù (605-706),¹⁴³ deeply respected and well patronized by the empress Wǔ Zétiān,¹⁴⁴ launched a sustained attack on his northern counterpart almost to the point of convincing posterity. In 732, some 24 years after Shénxiù’s death, Shénhuì denounced Shénxiù’s lineage for teaching a “gradualist” method of meditation and realization, and claimed that his own teacher, Huìnéng (whom he hardly knew), had received and maintained the true teaching of “sudden enlightenment.”¹⁴⁵ Shenhui spun up the humble monk, Huineng, into a colourful figure of the Sixth Patriarch we are now so familiar with; but his Hui-neng was merely a Zen myth to promote himself.¹⁴⁶

The Chinese priest **Dàhuì Zōnggǎo** (大慧宗杲 1089-1163), jealous of the success of “silent illumination meditation” (*mòzhào chán* 默照禪) of the Cáodòng 曹洞 school, especially because of its support from the literati, simply attacked it outright,¹⁴⁷ charging that, “Practicing in this way, how can they not fall into the realm of [dead-end] *dhyāna* and annihilation like the non-Buddhists and the Hīnayānists?”¹⁴⁸ Attacking the Caodong meditation, Dàhuì introduced his own *gōng’àn* (Jap *koan*) system.¹⁴⁹ Dahui’s reconstruction proved attractive enough to those who were intellectually inclined.¹⁵⁰

A psychological study of Tanaka’s childhood, his parents’ death, being an adopted child, his weak health, failed marriage and personality should give us a good idea of the inspirations for his religious

in medieval Japanese literature. In other words, it was a Japanese folk saying, not a Buddhist one. See Tamura 1991:52-57.

¹⁴¹ Tanaka violently rejected the pre-Mahāyāna notion of a woman’s “five obstacles” (*goshō*), listed and refuted in the Lotus Sutra. ie, women are unable to attain to the state of a Brahmā (Bon tennō), Indra (Taishaku), Māra (Māo), a wheel-turner (Tenrinnō), or a buddha: see Tanaka Tomoenosuke, 1930:12 f; Nakamura et al 1989:274; Tanaka Chigaku 1994:29; Jaffe 2001:175). These 5 “impossibilities” (*aṭṭhāna*) are listed in **Baḥu Dhātuka S** (M 115.15/-3:65 f = SD 19.1a). The Chinese trs and later Mahāyāna works add a sixth impossibility: women becoming a praty-eka-buddha (SD 19.1b). The 5 impossibilities have been shown by scholars to be a later interpolation. In a sense, Tanaka was right, but in his agenda led him to blindly jumping at shadows without shining a proper learned light at the proper context of the quotes he made.

¹⁴² Jaffe 2001:176.

¹⁴³ On Shenhui, see **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (5.2.1.2).

¹⁴⁴ **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (5.2.2).

¹⁴⁵ See **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (5.2.3.2; 5.3).

¹⁴⁶ See McRae 1987.

¹⁴⁷ See **How Buddhism became Chinese** = SD 40b (5.1.2.4).

¹⁴⁸ *Dàhuì yǔlù* 大慧語錄 T47.923b9-12. Such reports suggest that Dahui was neither a serious meditator (if he were one) nor a moral priest. See also Araki, *Daieo sho* 67; cited in Bielefeldt (tr), *Dōgen’s Manuals*, 1988: 101.

¹⁴⁹ See eg T47.884c-886a, 890a-892c, 901c, 923a, 933c, 937a-b.

¹⁵⁰ See Schlütter 2000:190.

views and actions. When we are drawn ourselves to a religion this is strongly *person-centred*, we are likely to be attracted to the features of such a personality that probably mirrors or resonates with a peculiar emotional need in us. Traditional Buddhism, on the other hand, was presented in such a manner by the Buddha and the early monastics so that it is a *system of healing and centering*—of individuation and emotional liberation—that we can work each for ourselves, like taking food or medicine, so that we are also wholesomely bonded with others and the world.

3.9 BENEFITS OF NIKUJIKI SAITAI AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. In chapter 9 of *Neither Monk Nor Layman* (2001), “From Doctrinal Concern to Practical Problem,” Jaffe sums up the results of the decades of argumentations regarding clerical marriage and shows how the new generation of clerics came to favour the *nikujiki saitai* through arguments based on biology, evolution, heredity and medical science. He provides a statistical analysis of clergy who actually married, despite the contradiction between their practices and doctrine.

This chapter introduces the problems of temple succession, that is, who takes over as abbot, and the social status of the wives and children of the dead abbot. With modernization came modern problems. The temple families were increasingly viewed as a “social” problem with the rise of a growing middle class and various social forces that defined “the social” in late Meiji Japan.

Jaffe examines statistical evidence showing that by the early Shōwa period (late 1920s) clerical marriage was common at most temples. The Christians, now better established, attacked Buddhist views of the family and the disparagement of women. Such attacks influenced some of the clerics to reject the traditional views of women and the family, and examine the practical problems of clerical families.

Where clerical marriages were clandestine, temple wives often lived as secret or assumed lives, and their children were effectively illegitimate, sons raised not as sons but as disciples of the abbot. Some argued that since such marriages were to socially under-privileged women (such as ex-prostitutes and widows), the gene pool of the clergy would not only be inferior but also endangered.

In due course, most sects introduced some form of “family protection laws.” Such sect laws were, however, mainly concerned with succession, which in effect unofficially recognized clerical marriage. Despite such changes, such laws did not really protect the temple wives, who even today live uncertain lives unless they produce an heir, that is, their sons become abbots. These issues are still not fully resolved even today.

3.10 UNRESOLVED ISSUES. In chapter 10, the last chapter of *Neither Monk Nor Layman*, Jaffe returns to the fundamental problem of clerical marriage, and summarizes all the related issues and arguments, reminding us that it has not yet been resolved, remaining a key issue in Japanese Buddhism today, blurring the line between the ordained and the lay. Despite widespread acknowledgement of this fact, notes **Covell** in his review, the established Buddhist denominations continue to attempt draw a line between clerical status and worldly status. This stubborn effort has resulted in a gap between rhetoric and practice that contributes to contemporary critiques of Temple Buddhism (2003:189), the subject of Covell’s *Japanese Temple Buddhism* (2005).

The value of Jaffe’s work is not only its in-depth historical and chronological approach to the *nikujiki saitai* law and its significance, but his careful examination of local writings and documents, giving us a good idea of the social context of the issues. Such an approach is a vital work on the social realities of a living religion that concerned Buddhists should be familiar with, so that we are more adept in solving similar or related issues and preventing them.

Perhaps a weakness in Jaffe’s book, since it focuses more on an overall critique of the historical situation of Japanese Buddhism, is that it does not give any *detailed doctrinal arguments*. As noted in **Asuka’s** review of Jaffe, this may not satisfy readers who are interested in doctrinal inconsistency with the *nikujiki saitai* law. For instance, although Jaffe compares the state of clerical life in the modern world with Shinran’s concept of “neither monk nor layman” [3.3.1], Shinran’s proclamation of this notion is based on the historical fact that his priesthood was taken away as part of the suppression of the nembutsu teaching (2002: 313).

Covell further mentions the paucity of primary pre-war Japanese sources on the temple wives. This leaves us to resort to the writings of clerical authorities, a rather biased group, in order to understand and

evaluate the lives of these women and their families (2003:189). Covell, however, usefully addresses this issue in chapter 6 of his book, *Japanese Temple Buddhism* (2005).

4 “Monks” who have sex

3.1 SOURCES. Religion offers effective solutions and alternatives to worldliness, but those who either ignore such possibilities or were misinformed regarding them, could be fall in the very problem they are supposed to overcome. One of the most serious issues of celibate monasticism is that of sexuality, a problem that has plagued Japanese Buddhism since early in its history. Jaffe, in his book, *Neither Monk Nor Layman* (2001), looks at the controversial development of clerical marriage from the perspective of the conservatives who saw it as a degeneration of the monastic tradition, and from the modernists and revisionists who saw it as necessary for modernization.

We have evidence of medieval clerical fornication from several types of historical documents, including government regulations, such as the 1665 *Shoshu jiin hatto* 諸宗寺院法度¹⁵¹ and the writings of the Catholic missionary, Francis Xavier, from 1549 and 1552, about the “enormous sins” of the bonzes (1992:336). Tokugawa criminal records demonstrate that anti-fornication regulations were enforced throughout the Edo period. These include the records of Kanrin Zenkoji, a cleric who was put to death by crucifixion for fornication in 1671 and, in 1824, the cleric Kyoze of Myoho-ji who was “punished by public exposure at Nihonbashi for having engaged prostitutes in Shinjuku, Yoshiwara, and elsewhere.”¹⁵²

The records we have of Japanese clerics not keeping to monastic rules go back to the 16th century, right down to the 20th century. Of the most recent developments, for example, Jaffe notes, “The 1991 schism between the Nichiren lay movement Soka Gakkai and its parent organization, the cleric-centered Nichiren Shoshu, is a prime example of the tension that can arise between organizations favoring complete laicization and those where a married priesthood still wields institutional control” (2001:233).¹⁵³

3.2 CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE. We have noted how since being excommunicated by the Nichiren Shoshu in 1991, the Soka Gakkai International members often prided themselves as Buddhism's first “Protestant” movement, as if taking Christianity as their standard of history or success. Indeed, in Meiji Japan's struggle to modernize herself, one of the powers she had to contend with was Christianity [2.1.5.2].

Jaffe notes, “From mid-Meiji through the Taisho period, the criticisms of Buddhism by domestic and foreign Christians made the recasting of Buddhist attitudes toward marriage, women, and family life imperative” (2001:198). During this time, Buddhists from several denominations wrote about the importance of family. In 1917, for example, Kuruma Takudo, a Sōtō cleric who was abbot of Banryu-ji in Tokyo, wrote that “marriage is one of the great issues of human existence. It is no exaggeration to say that the success or failure of a life depends on this event” (2001:220).

The threat of the Christians became more real when the Meiji introduced legislations to separate Buddhism from the state. This meant that Buddhism no more enjoyed state patronage as it did in pre-Meiji times. As Japan modernized and allowed religious freedom, Christianity became more established in Japan and started criticizing the Buddhists, understandably to discredit it as a rival religion. The fear that the Christians would overwhelm Buddhism in Japan, spurred the clerics on to take desperate measures in placing more emphasis in marriage, family life and the worldly engagement.

¹⁵¹ Jaffe 2001:18. Earlier temple regulations, amongst other things, outlawed same-sex relations between priests (*nanshoku*, 1652).

¹⁵² Jaffe 2001:23 f.

¹⁵³ In 1979, Ikeda was forced to resign as president of Sōka Gakkai, accepting responsibility for deviating from Nichiren Shōshū doctrines, and the accompanying conflict with the priesthood, and was succeeded by Hiroshi Hōjō. He was excommunicated by Nichiren Shōshū on 11 Aug 1992, but remained president of the new Soka Gakkai International (SGI). The position of Sōka Gakkai Honorary President was created for him by Nittatsu Shonin, then the Nichiren Shoshu High Priest. SGI members often prided themselves as Buddhism's first “Protestant” movement, since its excommunication by Nichiren Shoshu in 1991. The need to measure themselves with Christianity reflects a modernist trend common in Japan's “new religions.” See SHIMADA Hiromi, *Kōmeitō vs. Sōka Gakkai* (Jap), Asahi Shinsho, Tokyo, May 2007:114. See also **Cult Buddhism** = SD 34.5 (1.2.3.1).

Their reaction to such external challenges should be carefully compared how the “Theravāda” countries, especially Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand, themselves answered them. Mainly due to their strong grounding in Theravāda, which had suffered less changes than Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, these countries have not gone through such radical social and religious changes as Japan, even though Christian powers actually colonized Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

3.3 TEMPLE WIVES AND CHILDREN. The Buddha set down clear rules for monastic life, instituting one of the earliest legal systems in history, certainly the oldest canon law that we have. One of these rules is that of a total monastic celibacy [1.1] and related rules, along with various spiritual exercises for preventing the rise of sensual lust. When these rules are flouted and the training neglected, the consequences would be simple devastating, as our study of modern Japanese Buddhism shows.

Jaffe’s book, *Neither Monk Nor Layman* (2001), throws into clear relief the discrepancies between temple rules and their breaches, and that clerical marriages and fornication had been occurring amongst the Japanese clerics well into mediaeval times, when Buddhism was state-controlled. A very difficult issue that had long lay painfully hidden came to light with the decriminalization of *nikujiki saitai*. It was as if the government was throwing their hands up in the air and saying, well since you have been clandestinely taking meat and marrying, we might as well accept them officially. This was like a bright light shining into a herd of mating deer, blinding them for a good while, with various hunters waiting around hopefully.

The plight of the Japanese “temple wives and children” were never formally acknowledged by the Buddhist institutions until the 1880s. The women’s economic vulnerability, the illegitimacy of their children, and the dispossession of widows forced the various denominations to adopt temple family protection laws. This painful human problem was a key factor in easing the tension between those who supported clerical marriage and those who held that celibacy was vital to clerical life. By the end of the Meiji and the beginning of the Taisho periods—that is the early decades of the 20th century—several major denominations responded more favourably to clerical marriage.

3.4 PRIEST, CLERIC OR MONK? Proper terminology is one of the foundations for any accurate and useful study of Buddhism. Terms like “monk” (*bhikkhu*), “nun” (*bhikkhunī*), and *saṅgha* specifically refer to the monastic actors and situation. Understandably, Jaffe is careful to avoid using them to refer to those involved in clerical marriages and who do not keep to the traditional rules of monasticism. Jaffe also refrains from referring to them as “priests,” as not all of them are involved in performing rituals.

Jaffe uses “cleric” and “clergy” throughout his book for the Japanese words *sō* and *sōryo*, commonly translated as “monk” and “priest” respectively. The word monk implies celibacy, he notes, and as the book shows, many *sō* were married even before the Meiji period. By the Edo period, ordained leaders of the Jōdō Shin confraternities were also considered *sō*, but they clearly did not live as monks. As the word “cleric” simply refers to an official religious functionary and “clergy” to that class of individuals, they accurately reflect the full range of meanings of *sō* and *sōryo* (2001:xvii).

There is one difficulty with these usages, as noted by **Arai**, using the generic term “cleric” creates the impression that the author is speaking about both male and female ordained Buddhists. Perhaps Jaffe could have used the prefixed references to “male” clerics and “female” clerics where the context is uncertain (2005:2). But, I think, this is a minor point, as I too prefer using the term cleric here as more often than not, the male *sō* are the culprits here.

Arai, however, at the end of her review of Jaffe, makes a helpful note that although both the male and the female clerics faced the pressure of finding a successor, the overwhelming majority of nuns have rejected the option of marriage as a possible solution. “In considering why most male monastics have chosen to marry, but females have not, it is interesting to consider the differing roles within marriage. Men escape domestic duties by marrying. Women escape domestic duties by taking monastic vows!” (2005:2)

3.5 BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN KOREA

3.5.1 Japanese occupation of Korea. In the late 19th, various western powers came to Japan and asserted their influence which forced Japan to modernize herself. Emulating them, the Meiji government turned to Korea, then in the sphere of influence of China’s Qing dynasty. The Japanese at first tried to make Korea a Japanese satellite to further her security and national interests. In 1987, the Meiji

government employed gunboat diplomacy upon Korea, forcing her to open three Korean ports to Japanese trade and grant extraterritorial rights to Japanese citizens—this unequal treaty was similar to the one that the US exacted to Japan in 1854 [2.2].

After the signing of the Korea-Japan treaty of 1876, Japanese Buddhist sects, beginning with the Higashi Honganji sect of Pure Land, began to proselytize among the increasing number of Japanese immigrants living in Korea, an activity which soon spread to the native Koreans as well. Following complaints from the Japanese Nichiren missionaries, the Yi court in 1895 lifted the centuries-old prohibition against the presence of Buddhist monks in the capital of Seoul. During this period, too, the Sōn master **Kyōnghō** (1857-1912) and his disciples revived Sōn practice. His lineage continues to teach to this day.

When the Japanese finally occupied Korea (1910-1915), they used religion as a means to implement their colonial policy. They first united the scholastic Gyo (教) and contemplative Sōn (禪) sects¹⁵⁴ into one **Cho-ke-jong** in 1911, and forced the various denominations of Christianity into one Reformed Congregation of Churches (1942), then forced them to join in Shintō worship. Nearly 1000 Shintō shrines were erected by the Japanese, but Shintō gained very little support. These Japanese modifications ended as soon as Korea obtained independence in 1945 with the defeat of Japan in World War II.

During the Occupation, some Korean monks thought that the fortunes of Buddhism were dependent upon arranging a merger with a major Japanese sect. **Yi Hoe-gwang** went so far as to negotiate a combination of the Korean Sangha with the Japanese Sōtō sect. Most Koreans, however, regarded the “gradual” teachings of the Sōtō sect as going against the “sudden” (subitist) orientation of their own tradition, and blocked the move.

In 1913, **Hae Yong-un** (1879-1944), the only Buddhist signatory to the 1919 Korean independence declaration and a major literary figure, shocked his contemporaries by advocating that monks be allowed to marry, a move he felt necessary if Buddhism were to maintain a viable role in modern secular society. Despite objections from the traditional quarters of Korean Buddhists, the Japanese colonial government endorsed the proposal in 1926. Within a decade, virtually all temple abbots were married, thereby bringing a radical change to the traditional moral discipline of the Korean clergy.

Korea, in the 1920s and the 1930s, under Japanese rule, had less than 200,000 Koreans on the entire peninsula willing to identify themselves publicly as Buddhists. In fact, Japanese statistics show more Christians than Buddhists or any other religious adherents in Korea during the colonial period. After the Korean War, as the number of self-proclaimed Christians in the independent Republic of Korea rose dramatically, the number of those who called themselves Buddhists rose dramatically as well.

3.5.2 Rise of Christianity in Korea. Unlike Japan, Christianity established itself significantly well in Korea. This was due to at least three important reasons. Firstly, Buddhism was badly persecuted by the pro-Confucianist Joseon or Yi dynasty (1392-1897) so that it is relegated to the countryside, and effectively left a religious vacuum in the urban areas.

Secondly, the Japanese occupation brought in Buddhist proselytizers to convert and Nipponize the Koreans, who as such built further resistance to Buddhism. Then came the Communist invasion, resulting in the Korean War of 1950. The war totally devastated Korea. Through massive US support, South Korea grew into one of the economic miracles of Asia. This radical social change affected every aspect of Korean society, so that every Korean was open to the American way of life.

As Protestant Christianity is seen as a part of the American way of life, the Protestant church was eagerly accepted by many Koreans. Korea still boasts some of the largest Protestant congregations in the world, and is even sending missionaries to other countries. However, it is clear that this trend has now slowed down with the renaissance of Korean Buddhism at the turn of the century

The modern Buddhist temples in urban areas run kindergartens, publish glossy magazines, and sing hymns at Sunday worship services, just as Christian churches do. In fact, in **Pusan**, South Korea’s second largest city and the only potential rival to Seoul for cultural domination of the southern half of the Korean peninsula, it appears that it is Buddhism rather than Christianity which is the mark of urban modernity.

¹⁵⁴ These two groupings coincides with the Pali Commentarial dichotomy of the duties of *gantha,dhura* (study-centred training) and *vipassanā dhura* (meditation-centred training) (AA 1:312; DhA 1:7; ThaA 2:101; ApA 275).

According to the 1997 Gallup poll, almost 35% of the population in Pusan and the surrounding Kyeongnam province call itself Buddhist, compared to less than 12% who say they are Protestant and around 3% who say they are Catholic.

5 Conclusion

As Buddhism spread outside India and grew more acculturated to its foreign environment, its local forms rose to greater prominence, often displacing the original tenets, especially its monastic rules and meditation training. The health and life of a living religion or spiritual system depends vitally on its ability to recall the Dharma and live in its spirit. External aspects of Buddhism, such as ways of chanting or depicting holy images might be localized, but the heart of Dharma must be presented as it is so that the true goal of the Buddha's teaching may be realized even by a select few. A million mosquitoes are not worth even a single milch cow with nourishing milk.

Buddhism first reached Japan as a magical curiosity for the royal elite. As they mastered the teachings, they build magnificent edifices to glorify their royal and elite Buddhisms, while the commoners remained untouched by them until compassionate and resourceful clerics simplified or modified Buddhism for them. While royalty and the elite exploited the *wisdom* of Buddhism to consolidate their power, the commoners found Buddhist *compassion* most healing for the smart of their daily grind and difficult times.

However, as the clerics became richer and more powerful, patronized by the ruling elite and the affluent, they became worldly and corrupt. As one sect competed with another, as one guru vied another, for the eyes and pockets of patrons, they rehashed Buddhism, like crafty peddlars repackaging poor products more colourfully with peddler's promises. The uninformed public, consumers by nature, easily fell for fashionable teachings and exotic meditations, which in due course became staple Buddhism for the unthinking, the desperate and the fashionable.

These dramatic reversals of Buddhist fortunes—such as “monastics” having sex, clerical marriages and new Buddhisms—devastated Japanese spirituality mainly because it was steeped in nationalism and deep respect for authority, tried and troubled constantly by natural disasters and national catastrophes. Just as they adapted what they saw advantageous in foreign cultures, they freely reconstructed Buddhism to their image and needs.

Such sea changes to Singapore Buddhisms are unlikely because she is a very small nation, less than 600 sq km with 5 million inhabitants, on which only 3 million were local born, and strongly westernized with English widely spoken, very dependent on foreign talents. Indeed, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, almost all the Buddhisms in Singapore were foreign missions, either serving their own ethnic communities or praying for a share of the local prosperity. Most of her monastics and priests were very affluent and tax-free, often owning properties and businesses, living by exceptions rather than the rules, so that scandals were common enough, especially in terms of funds and sexuality.¹⁵⁵

In such urban plenty, clerics were easily tempted to break the rules of spiritual health, socializing with the laity, often becoming intimate with them. The affluent laity, bedazzled by the powers, learning, or eccentricity of the clerics felt privileged to be intimate with them. Intimacy easily overrode training rules, and the light of the Dharma was snuffed, and the smoulder burst into fiery lust. The clerics might present themselves as pious monastics but their cloth was soiled, their hearts dark: they seemed blind to the fact that they could not keep the cake and eat it. It is still never too late to return to the noble path.

One leads to worldly gain, but the other is the path to nirvana.
Clearly understanding this, the Buddha's disciple
would not delight in honour,
but develop detachment. (Dh 75)

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¹⁵⁵ See eg **The Three Roots Inc** = SD 31.12 (3.4.4).

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